

REVIEWS: DeScribe, Performance Plus 3.0, OnCmd, Power Translator Professional and more...

SEPTEMBER 1995, VOLUME III, NUMBER 8

\$3.95 U.S. \$4.95 Canada



PROFESSIONAL

DeScribe: Ahead by a Nose

REVIEWS:

Performance Plus 3.0,
OnCmd and Power
Translator Professional

PLUS:

Speeding Up
Your Warped PC



The top half of the advertisement features a large, repeating pattern of the text "OS/2" in a serif font. The text is arranged in a grid-like fashion, with some instances in a lighter gray and others in a darker gray. In the center of this pattern, one instance of "OS/2" is highlighted in a bright blue color, and the "2" in that instance is a vibrant red. This graphic serves as a background for the headline and the two columns of text below.

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Here's your chance to go behind the scenes of *OS/2 Professional* and see why, after more than 18 months of evaluating and re-evaluating word processors, we ultimately chose DeScribe as the company-wide standard.

PRODUCTS, REVIEWS & TECH TALK

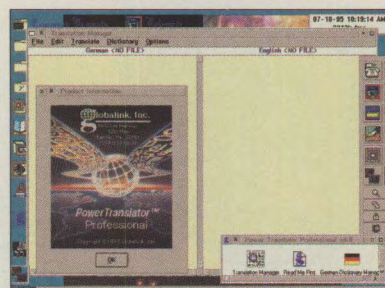
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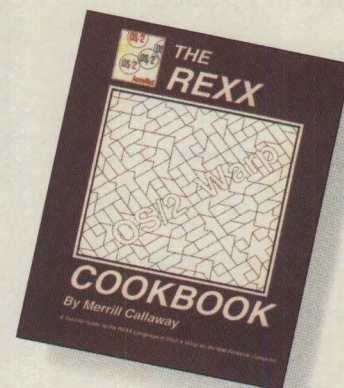
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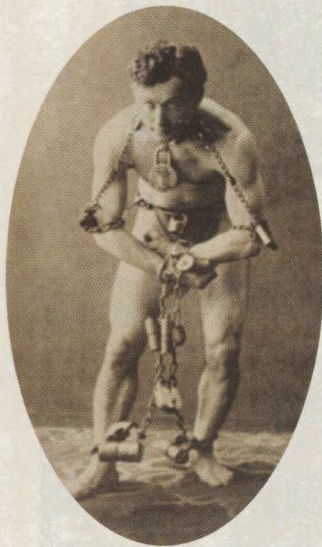
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COVER PHOTO: TONY STONE IMAGES
COVER DESIGN: SUSAN V. LEVINE
KIRSTEN M. GAFNEY

Even Houdini couldn't change partitions any faster.



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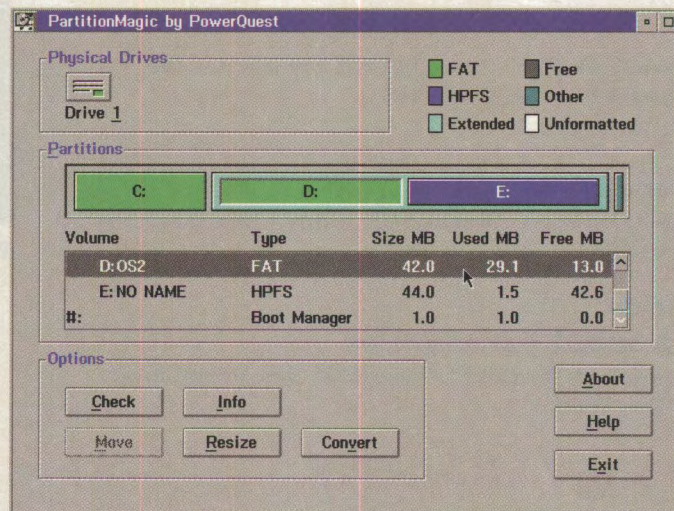
lives so much easier. ”

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Information Specialist
Lockheed Martin Energy Systems, Inc.



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Field Name	Field Type	Description
Id	Number	Unique customer id
Last name	Text	Customer last name
First name	Text	Customer first name
Middle initial	Text	Customer middle initial
Balance	Number	Customer account balance
Comments	Memo	Any comments about customers acc

Format

Decimal places: 6



Default value:

Can be blank: No

Validation rule:

Validation text:

Columns
Keys
Table

1994 International Flag Sales		
1-Feb-1995		
Country	Sales	% of Total
Canada		
		
1st Quarter	\$419.47	9.64%
2nd Quarter	\$472.78	10.86%
3rd Quarter	\$501.26	11.52%
4th Quarter	\$515.67	11.85%
Total for Canada:	\$1,909.18	43.87%
United Kingdom		
		
1st Quarter	\$543.75	12.50%
2nd Quarter	\$611.39	14.05%
3rd Quarter	\$597.99	13.74%
4th Quarter	\$689.12	15.84%
Total for United Kingdom:	\$2,442.25	56.13%
Grand Total:	\$4,351.43	100.0%

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OS/2 Beyond Win95

BY EDWIN BLACK

So where do we go from here? Win95 is a fact. Upgrades and new users will be tallied by the measurement MPW: millions per week. OS/2 will have lost the war, and lost miserably, but will survive and even prosper. So will OS/2 apps. Here are my predictions.

Acceptance of Win95. The master of UI, Microsoft, will benefit greatly from its disingenuous GUI with whistles and bells that will make users believe they are getting performance and productivity they really aren't. Win95 will be everywhere. When QVC takes advance orders for Win95—16,000 in just a few hours—and the Home Shopping Club starts hawking \$2,000 computers with 8MB and Win95, you know computers have become household appliances. But beware. There will be a post-Christmas backlash the likes of which has never been experienced as ordinary users upgrading from 386 DOS and/or simple Win3.1 computers discover that multithreaded, multitasking 32-bit, RAM-sucking operating systems do not easily interact with every piece of software in the world.

Average users won't know or care what backward compatibility is, and they will never believe a driver is anything more than the guy behind the steering wheel. And they won't like surviving crashes. When things just don't work, there will be a storm of rejection of Win95.

OS/2 benefits from the backlash. It's now an open secret that Warp is the superior OS. Unfortunately, for the overwhelming majority of Win95 users that will be irrelevant. They will limp along with Win95 because they either don't care, don't know any better or have no alternative. But maybe a million or more real users will make an intelligent decision to either remain with, switch to or upgrade to Warp. OS/2 should then enjoy a phony installed base of about 15 million and a real daily booting base of

about 5 million. Warp will be the preferred and better, but hardly more numerous OS. At the same time, IBM has made its commitment to OS/2 clear. During a late July press teleconference I point blank asked IBM's software chieftain John W. Thompson, Lotus head Jim Manzi and SWS General Manager Steve Mills to unequivocally confirm support for OS/2 for the balance of 1995 and 1996. They did, answering, "even far beyond 1996." And Steve Mills personally reassured me of that during phone a con-

versation just after a highly dubious *NY Times* story reflected a so-called OS/2 "concession" statement by Lou Gerstner.

That means Warp will continue its migration down the corporate pyramid to the homes and small businesses of those corporate users. Sometime in 1997, the Warp base may again double and OS/2 might be ready for real personal home use. That is, if all remains as it is, which is unlikely. OS/2 ISVs with a brain—and there are precious few because IBM alienated the big guys with a brain—will find they have a ready and able multimillion user market that will grow, but very

incrementally. That will require immense staying power by ISVs who must relinquish the notion of a wild success tied to IBM. But OS/2 will be lucrative. So, small, smart ISVs can thrive.

IBM will never improve. IBM will continue its bizarre inexecutable business notions as key promotional personnel float in and out en masse. The new ambassadors of Warp will tire, as I have, of begging IBM to achieve a degree of sanity. Let's get beyond that.

The point. Warp will remain, but its incremental growth will come from dedicated rational users who grow the base with their own success. That's you. Our outpost has become a colony. The colony will live long and prosper. ♦



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Comments, criticisms, and observations

New user, old advice

I just finished reading Kogan's Korner [*IBM Tools Up OS/2 Application Strategy*, June] and couldn't agree more with his conclusions. I'm a relatively recent OS/2 convert and am pleased with it.

However, I have noticed a dearth of applications. It seems there are plenty of development tools available. But most non-developers don't buy a computer to run operating systems; they buy them to run applications. It would be a great boon to OS/2 if users could walk into their local retail computer megastore and select OS/2 versions of many of the popular Windows applications. The Windows versions under OS/2 take much longer to load (unless you want the memory burden of keeping a Windows session running all the time) and there are almost always some nagging little compatibility problems.

Give us more OS/2 applications!

Ivan Dzombak

via the Internet

De-installation of Windows

I don't care if Bill Gates runs the world or not; I don't even care if all PCs run Windows. What I do care about is innovation and choice.

I run a small graphic design business in Ottawa, Canada, and spend much of my time looking for the next hot product that will give my company an edge. I rarely find that product on a Windows platform unless it's been ported over.

My concern is that developers will refocus resources away from other platforms and towards Windows, as indeed seems the case. There are, and have been for years, a number of platforms with some very compelling features. While the rest of the world waits like lemmings for Win95, I have been using a number of 3D animation packages in a truly multitasking environment since I started my company in 1991.

If, because of Microsoft's anti-competitive actions developers focus on Windows apps, who will dream up the

next generation of great technologies? Even more importantly, if no one is developing breakthrough technologies for other platforms, where will Microsoft get its ideas?

Dave Healey

via CompuServe

Although I have been, in the past six months, converted from Windows to OS/2, I'm afraid I must agree with Jerry Pournelle [*Remember When*, June] that breaking up Microsoft would be a bad idea—for the same reasons he states.

Giving the government the bureaucratic power it needs to break up Microsoft would be very damaging to the computer industry and the whole computer "society." We are already seeing the effects of a government that wants to be our Big Brother (I'm referring to the Exxon Bill and Clipper). Giving the government the opportunity to stick its nose in at one place makes it that much easier for it to stick its nose in any place else.

On the other hand, Mr. Pournelle is incorrect in his assumption that Microsoft has not become as arrogant as IBM. Try talking to Microsoft tech support when you want an app to work right. I'm positive there's a section in Microsoft's Help Desk support training called "telling the customer it's all their fault."

Christopher Brennan Wright

via the Internet

News, vapor and ethics

Your Bytes & Pieces [*Warped Wally Casey Comments*, June] says "this is the first time a PSP official has not been forthcoming in an interview" when Wally Casey declined to "name" forthcoming software. Is he lacking in integrity or cooperation because he won't be part of the vaporware game? Are you talking out of both sides of your mouth? After all, how could journalists get "scoops" if they have to wait until products are ready for distribution?

This is definitely an ethical issue your

July panel can address, whether or not IBM has a presence on it.

Arelene R. Foreman

Fort Myers, Florida

We didn't criticize Wally Casey for not being vaporous but because while Casey was claiming to OS/2 Professional no one at IBM knew exactly where the Warp family of products was going next, IBM had openly briefed another computer trade journal on ExtendPak, BusinessPak and a slew of other Paks. The published briefing appeared just after we went to press.—Edwin Black

ADvice and praise

You say you "have a sense of right and wrong" [Input, February], and I agree with your decision to not use a bikini-clad woman in the OnSpec ad. But how could you overlook something so egregious as TechBridge Technology Corporation's ad (p. 10) displaying Jesus and Mary in your May issue? I found this very disturbing, as I would think most Christians would. It hurts to see my Lord and his Mother so trivialized. I hope you also will use your sense of right and wrong to nip in the bud what is more offensive than a bikini-clad woman.

Mike Morrow

via CompuServe

Techbridge's business development manager Douglas Fraser says the artwork is of an ecclesiastic classic found in a Corel clip-art library and was chosen "at random" for no particular reason. Fraser assures OS/2 Professional "that ad will never run again," adding, "no offense was intended and we apologize to any readers who were offended."—Edwin Black

Noted Errors

Gordon Scott made a few errors in the May issue [*Flexing Warp's Muscles*, IS Notebook, May].

First of all, the menu configuration

continued on page 13

New!
Version 5
Remote control via TCP/IP,
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Rather Fly Than Walk?

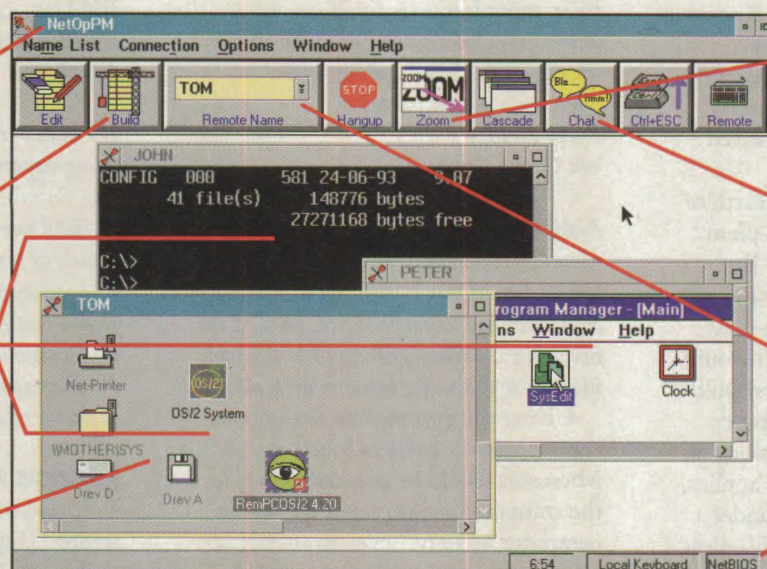
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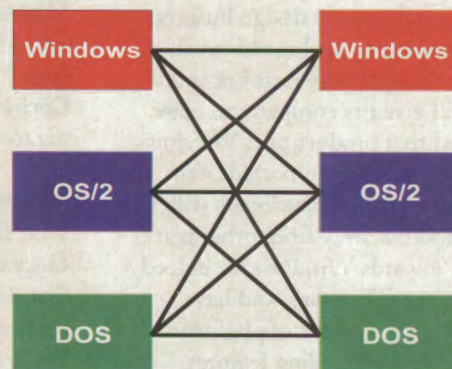
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BYTES & PIECES

News and trivialities, important and obscure

Corel still unsure

Late on June 15, as our July-August issue was going to press, *OS/2 Professional* learned exclusively that as a direct result of IBM's acquisition of Lotus Development Corporation, Corel would stop all development of its OS/2

products:

CorelDRAW6, the Corel CD Office Suite and OS/2 applications for the PowerPC. The announcement was to be made at a press conference Corel had tentatively scheduled for June 19, with media notifications going out the next day. A Corel source would

only say, "The Lotus acquisition completely changes the landscape in terms of IBM's interest in Notes. It gives Notes incredible backing. Notes can run on top of any platform and now suddenly it becomes even more enticing. We have been very interested in adding support for Notes for Corel Flow and Ventura. But now, we just don't know what's happening."

Corel's departure would have been a major setback for Warp. A time-sensitive scenario now developed for IBM: Could it dissuade Corel from leaving OS/2 before the company announced its press conference? It required instant response late on a Thursday.

Unfortunately, efforts to commence a dialog with PSP officials in Austin were completely unsuccessful. Several of PSP's most senior officials in Austin declined to take or return calls from *OS/2 Professional* on the subject despite

being told that such an announcement was imminent. IBM officials at SWS and Corporate, however, took the matter very seriously.

Within two or three minutes of learning that a major ISV was about to pull, IBM executives in Somers began phoning Corel and others in IBM's most senior management to stop the announcement. Within an hour or so, as a result of the calls, Corel indeed put their announcement on hold.

In the intervening weeks, several phone discussions have been held, but nothing has been resolved. Corel officials are hoping for a face-to-face meeting either in Boston or Ottawa with both IBM and Lotus executives. But at press time in mid-July, no meeting has yet been scheduled and a Corel source lamented, "It will be weeks before a final decision is made. Nobody wants this limbo. We need to set the record straight. Our customers are entitled to know."

Warp in Israel

"Warp is alive but not very well in Israel." That's the assessment of *OS/2 Professional* Editor-in-Chief Edwin Black, following a recent tour of the country. Some 40 OS/2 Teamers travelled from all over Israel to attend that country's first OS/2 User Group meeting, held outside Tel Aviv, and organized by *OS/2 Professional*. IBM units in Paris, Italy, Germany and Somers contributed software, including two copies of Bloodhound, for the gathering. PSP in Austin declined to support the event.

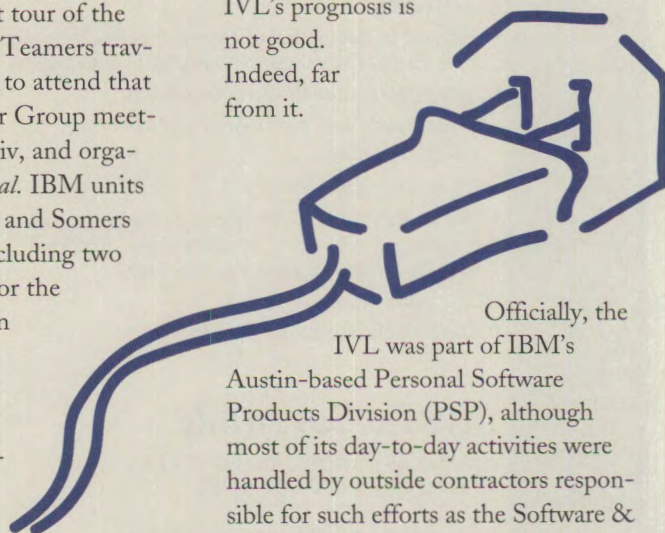
Two of IBM Israel's leading marketing executives attended the affair, which was

videotaped. The Warp users, some of whom were still in high school, expressed the identical frustrations user groups in America do. Israeli users decried the lack of promotional support for Team OS/2, the absence of any marketing plan, but also claimed IBM refused to take orders for Warp in Israel. One Teamer, known as Costya, wryly complained, "IBM is OS/2's worst enemy. I think they are secretly working for Microsoft."

IBM Israel denied it refuses to sell Warp, but Big Bluers did concede they were completely confused about how to market the product. Later, IBM Israel's general manager Yeshua Moar told Black that IBM's desktop involvement in Israel is minimal and one company represents all of IBM's business—mainframe, PCs, software and consulting. He also vowed to do more to promote Warp with information and support.

IVL unplugged

Reports that IBM has pulled the plug on the Independent Vendor League (IVL) remain, for the moment, slightly premature. Yet the IVL's prognosis is not good. Indeed, far from it.



Officially, the IVL was part of IBM's Austin-based Personal Software Products Division (PSP), although most of its day-to-day activities were handled by outside contractors responsible for such efforts as the Software &

BYTES & PIECES

Solutions Directory and IBM's OS/2 accredited Logo program. Both programs are being phased out.

When it was originally formed in 1992, the IVL's mandate was to encourage and help authors, writers and publications involved with OS/2. The IVL has drawn high praise from members and observers alike for its gutsy, almost guerilla-like promotion of OS/2. But last spring, PSP began dismantling the structure of outside contractors. Contracts were not renewed and some agreements were unilaterally abrogated, such as one promising 700,000 copies of *Sources and Solutions* when in fact about 350,000 were printed.

Today, no one at PSP can explain what the IVL is and is not doing, and many expect it to quietly disappear altogether in the weeks to come.

Vendor Council seeks new role

Meanwhile, the two-year old OS/2 Vendor Council remains in a state of dormancy following its May board meeting at the Technical Interchange in New Orleans where members voted to reexamine the council's charter and accepted the resignation of Scott Vouri of Binar Graphics as chairman of the Vendor Council. Due in part to frustration—council membership is all volunteer—and in light of the recent formation of Blue Orchard, the Indelible Blue spin-off formed to handle soup-to-nuts OS/2 product distribution and marketing, a steering committee was formed to reevaluate the Vendor Council's mission. "The council proved that there is a demand for OS/2 applications and that promotions can work,"

said MSR's Dudley Westlake, who is also heading up the steering committee. "The challenge for our volunteer organization," he continued, "was to try to pull together a common theme, give the products a common look and develop a merchandising focus that integrates the vendors, IBM, retail outlets and the customers. All of these things demanded more time than this volunteer group could break up into part-time pieces. We came to the conclusion that the next step required an effort that these new groups were willing and able to take."

At press time in mid-July, Westlake was cramming to finalize a report that he hoped to present to the council's membership at OS/2 World in Boston. ♦

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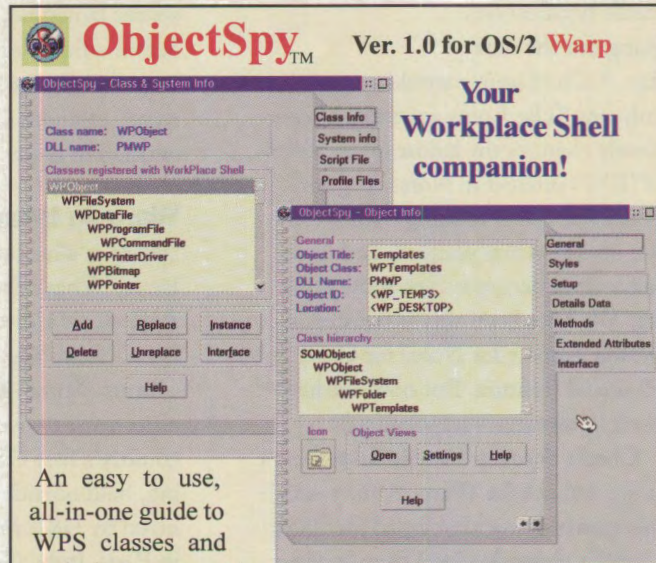
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INPUT

continued from page 9

tip remains incomplete. Before modifying the ALTF1.CMD file or the ALTF1*.SCR files under Warp, their read-only attributes must be disabled.

Also, the current ALTF1.CMD file defaults to a desktop restore if the supplied parameter is NOT a 'V' or an 'M'. Unless the ALTF1.CMD file is modified, a response of 'A' or 'B' to the lines added to ALTF1BOT.SCR would cause the current ALTF1.CMD file to attempt to apply the 'A' or 'B' to the desktop restore facility. Depending on how the restore facility is constructed, that could cause problems.

He also should have specified some way to copy and rename CONFIG.A or CONFIG.B.

The tip about allowing "the system to automatically recover from even the worst errors" was also flawed.

The 'trapdump=ON C;' line should

be 'trapdump=ON,C;' to be syntactically correct. 'Trapdump=ON', according to the manual, initiates a standalone dump of all memory and has very specific restrictions for going to a hard disk. If Mr. Scott simply wanted to log the contents of the trap error, he should have suggested using 'SUPPRESSPOPUPS'=C which would direct the system to send trap information to a 'POPUPLOG.OS2' file in the root directory on the C drive.

In spite of the misinformation, the tip is a valuable one. I have a customer support BBS and, in the event of a software crash, could use the SUPPRESSPOPUPS and PEIPL parameters to force a reboot of my system even if I'm not available.

Leland C. Sheppard

via CompuServe

Please open a window

Even though I read your reasoned

response, I have to say that Howard Brazee was right on the money when he chided *OS/2 Professional* for ignoring Windows applications [*Open a window*, Input, June].

Our department is an OS/2 shop, but all our major applications are Windows-based. I have used OS/2 in several iterations over the past few years. Still, even though I have spent way too much time fiddling with my WIN-OS/2 settings, I just don't seem to be able to get it right.

You would be doing your readers an extraordinary service if you could provide an explanation of the various WIN-OS/2 settings that I must confront as I try to make a natively superior computer (486-DX2 66MHz/16 MB RAM) and operating system (OS/2) run as fast as or faster than the inherently inferior computer (486-DX/33MHz)

continued on page 54

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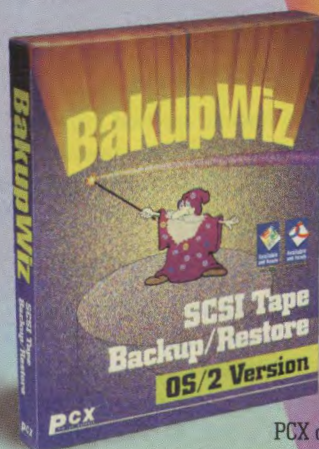
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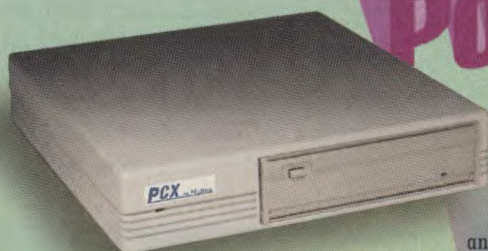
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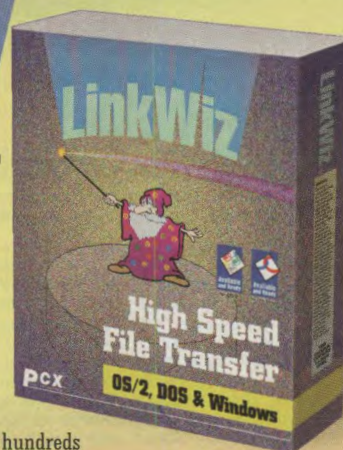
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Chaos Reigns

BY BRADLEY D. KLIEWER

We are stuck in a culture that embraces chaos—from intense interest in fractals and strange attractors to the marketing of software. Windows 95 seems to fill the role of a strange attractor of another sort. Despite continued revelations about the quirks in both the design and operation of the newest Windows offering, consumers seem ready to embrace this unproven technology wholeheartedly. However, business users who require reliability should take this milestone as an opportunity to reconsider their corporate direction.

A quick look at the Win95 beta (the gold version was not yet available at press time) revealed how Microsoft will appease the masses. From your first glimpse of Win95 through its install program, you find an elegant display that immediately makes you feel at home. The Win95 install works at least as well as Warp Connect's, and its attractive simplicity is necessary, perhaps, before jarring you with an entirely new user interface (not unlike many users' first experiences with Warp).

Like Warp's Workplace Shell, the new Win95 interface marks an important advance over Windows 3.1. However, as many industry experts have observed, Win95's beauty runs only skin deep. The architecture has substantial problems. Where Warp gives Win-OS/2 and each DOS and native OS/2 32-bit application its own environment, Win95 shares critical resources between DOS, Windows 3.1 and Win32 applications in an attempt to provide ultimate compatibility with older applications. One bug in one errant application can crash the entire system.

It's as if these two companies were to enter a Kindergarten classroom. IBM hands every child a box of 64 crayons; the colors are varied, but not flashy. Microsoft hands every child a box of crayons that include vivid and exciting neons and glitter. However, the box holds only 60 crayons, so Microsoft provides a single box of four critical colors (red, blue, yellow and green) to be shared by all of the children. If one of these crayons is lost, the teacher must

gather up all of the scattered crayons and replace all of the sets.

Win95 must also prove itself truly capable of the backwards compatibility users expect. Several recently published surveys continue to underscore the importance of DOS applications in the corporate environment. Yet the Win95 beta does not multi-task DOS applications as smoothly as Warp, nor does it allow you to run multiple legacy versions of DOS. Windows NT, the acknowledged corporate target system, also limits DOS operations. Curiously, the mainstream press continues to push NT, with occasional cursory nods to Warp, as the ideal corporate system, despite the ever widening gap between NT and Warp sales (and a parallel widening lead of OS/2 LAN Server over NT Server).

Indeed, Warp seems well positioned to take a commanding lead as the corporate operating system of choice. The chaos sure to ensue as users struggle with hardware incompatibilities and different interfaces on their corporate and home desktops should lead IS managers still committed to a Windows environment to reconsider their choices. If an interface change remains inevitable, Warp provides a unique set of attributes that make it ideal for both home and office: backward compatibility, a proven object-oriented design, and a base operating system code that has remained stable for years. Savvy IS man-

agers will encourage their employees to install Warp Connect at home so they can get up to speed more quickly and efficiently and, as a bonus, be prepared for connections between their computers at home and office.

Warp Connect is what Warp should have been all along: a more robust and friendly install, a simple choice of two packaging options (with WIN-OS/2 or without), and a peer to peer networking component that even home users can exploit. Yet Warp Connect appeared without much fanfare and has been extremely slow in appearing on retail shelves. The question that remains, as always, is whether IBM can parlay Warp's real useability advantages into an effective marketing campaign. ♦



DESCRIBE:



AHEAD

**BY BRADLEY D. KIEWER,
JIM WILLIS AND EDWIN BLACK**

In the July/August issue, we announced that *OS/2 Professional* had adopted DeScribe as its official word processor. In our internal horse race, DeScribe worked against significant handicaps. Some basic operations seem far from intuitive and DeScribe's original marketing and packaging practices made us question the product's future. Yet, once past the initial interface quirks, we have concluded that DeScribe 5.0

is a feature-laden program with solid performance in the areas that matter most—getting your ideas out of your head and onto virtual paper. Moreover, recent marketing changes gave us reason to applaud and restored our faith in the product's ability to survive in the marketplace. Our decision to switch, some 18 months in the making, was based on a number of factors and was by no means easy. The leading alternate contenders were

Photo: Tony Stone Images



BY A NOSE

Fast and powerful,
DeScribe has managed

to overcome its handi-
caps in the first leg of
Warp's Triple Crown.

Microsoft Word for Windows 6.0 and Lotus AmiPro (newer entries such as Clearlook arrived too late for consideration but will be examined on a regular basis).

At a Failure for Words

Until recently, our primary word processing platform was Word for DOS 5.0 and 5.5. Microsoft Word for Windows was used as a document converter between formats. Ironically, our bias leaned

SPECIAL REPORT

heavily toward Word for Windows because it was the most familiar and Word for DOS had served us so well for so long (Editors Edwin Black and Brad Kliwer have been Word users since its introduction more than 10 years ago). However, its lack of support for long file names and resource requirements as the only Windows program on our desktops weighed heavily against it. At first, Word seemed to have the most features, but as we became more familiar with DeScribe, we discovered both have roughly equivalent power. They're just focused a bit differently. In fact, in many important aspects, DeScribe is more powerful.

We favored Lotus AmiPro's (soon to be WordPro) intuitive user interface. In our initial tests, some features were better integrated with OS/2 Warp's Workplace Shell than DeScribe, such as dragging an open document to the fax. As Lotus massaged AmiPro through its minor revisions, DeScribe also worked improvements into its program, bringing both to roughly the same level. Editing features clinched the decision. We live day in and day out in our word processing program, and as authors and editors of books, magazines and countless correspondence, we push our word processors to the limits. Thus, what may seem like minor quirks in AmiPro became the straw that broke the camel's back.

AmiPro displays text based on a page view rather than a streaming text view. Thus when editing a sentence that spans two pages, you can see either the first or the last part, but not both at the same time. The first few times this happened, it was merely annoying. By the time we had seen this behavior dozens of times in the course of a day's work, it became intolerable. But even DeScribe does not show a page break as unobtrusively as the old Word for DOS, which simply ran a dotted line between pages. DeScribe devotes considerable space to the "page frame" between pages.

For those who are slow to change, consider that the one person at *OS/2 Professional* most resistant to change and unwilling to learn new tricks was Black himself. But even he finally had to admit that DeScribe was easy to learn, easy to master and powerful enough to justify reorienting the entire company (which was built around Word for DOS).

A Complete Menu

DeScribe is not without annoying quirks—particularly in the user interface. It seems to handle commands just a little bit different-

ly than you might expect. For example, rather than listing recent files at the bottom of the File menu (like most programs), it lists them under a submenu (File Recall). In another departure, unlike most programs that put search and replace operations under Edit or in a dedicated menu called Find, DeScribe throws Define search and Modify search along with both forward and backward repeat selections under an atypical menu named Words. However, once we adjusted our habits—a fairly lengthy process aided by remapped accelerator keys—the power and even logic behind these changes became apparent.

When you think about it, it really does make sense to group

Had DeScribe's licensing policy not changed, we would have selected a different platform.

word-oriented operations such as search and replace, spell checking, definitions and thesaurus search in a dedicated menu. The name word processor speaks for itself. Moreover, the numerous permutations on the search function would overwhelm a more general-purpose menu such as Edit, Utilities or Tools.

DeScribe lacks a grammar checker (which we never use anyway on systems that have one), but otherwise supports the range of utilities you would expect—and some you might not. For example, the Words menu includes a Proper names selection that finds every capitalized term in your text. You may then opt to replace one term with another. This is great for maintaining consistency (such as fixing product names entered as both CorelDraw and CorelDRAW).

To help ease the learning curve, we redefined hotkey sequences to either Microsoft Word or other OS/2 application standards. For example, we assigned the F7 key to Words Spell document (instead of the default Ctrl-Q) and the F2 key to File Save (the default menu assigns no accelerator). Oddly enough, DeScribe does not assign any keys to character attributes such as bold, italic and underline. It's difficult to imagine any decent touch typist working through the menus or using a mouse to hit the attribute buttons. Instead, we assigned the familiar Ctrl-B to

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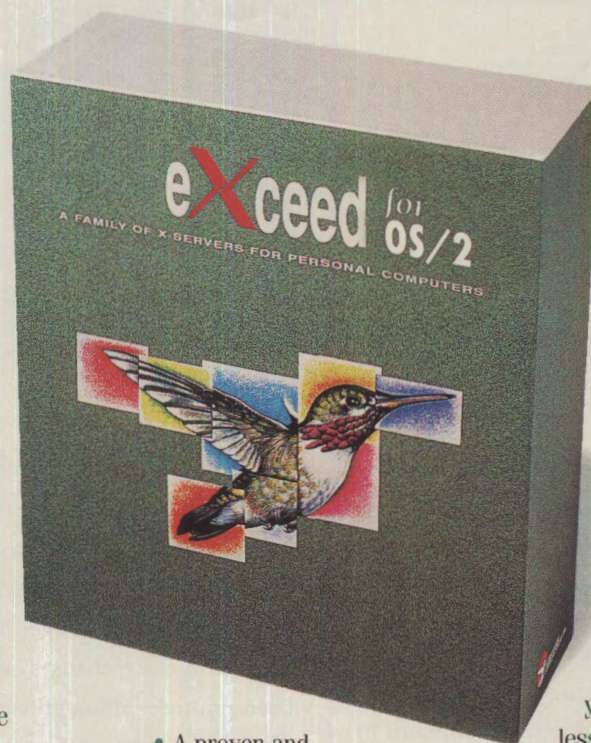
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SPECIAL REPORT

bold and Ctrl-I to italic.

Fortunately, changing the menu accelerator keys is quite simple. We wish it were as easy to assign hot key sequences to paragraph styles—instead you must write a macro and assign it to a key sequence through Options Keyboard manager. Furthermore, unlike Word for Windows, DeScribe cannot assign multiple letters to a single control sequence (such as Ctrl-NP for normal paragraph), which imposes some limitations if you define many shortcut sequences. You may also need to rethink your style definitions if you intend to use the keyboard manager. Unless you're willing to write some fancy conditional statements, the standard paragraph for every style sheet will require the same name: you can't have "Article\Body" as the default for one style and "Letter\Body" as the default for another.

Hits and Misses

Overall, the default DeScribe setup shortchanges the touch typist. While it is possible to retool the menu and macro definitions to make DeScribe more keyboard friendly, we wonder how many people will have the time (or prerequisite knowledge) to make the changes. As word processing power users, DeScribe's raw power got us hooked. It's a shame to think that users without the time to explore these alternate configurations or programming skills to implement them may be put off by the default configuration.

Also, one major feature is missing in our opinion: a simple document rename option. In Word for DOS it was three easy steps: Esc Transfer Rename. But DeScribe can't do it. Instead you must Save As and thereby create a whole new document—a waste of space. And lo and behold, the original one is still there. You can close the document and then use OS/2 itself to rename the file, but that hardly compares to Word's three keystroke procedure. Or, again, the computer savvy could write a macro program that would Save As and then delete the first document.

Fortunately, these shortcomings are balanced against DeScribe's own unique functions. For instance, DeScribe has a nifty undo that "erases" changes you didn't mean to make, keystroke by keystroke, with the mouse button push of an arrow—

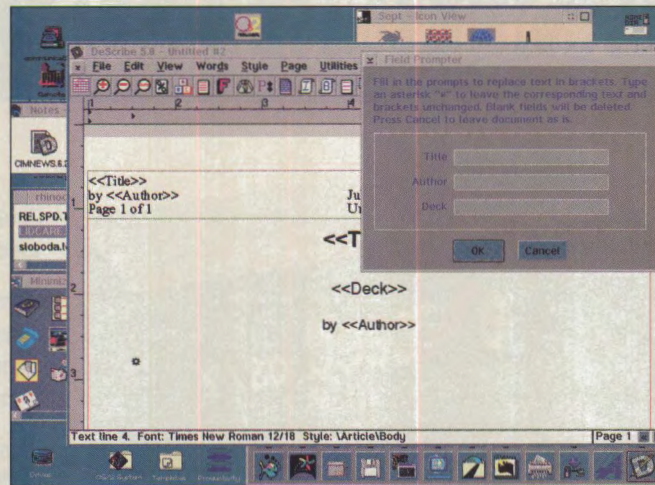
as long as you don't save before undoing the change or close the document. Also, DeScribe not only remembers your last eight documents through its Recall menu, it also remembers where you were last working in each document. DeScribe saves the cursor position with the document, so even e-mailed files retain the cursor location. When you cycle through perhaps dozens of documents in the course of a day, this feature saves time. Thus, another

minor feature became one of the clinching decision points.

Yet another subtle but much appreciated trait is DeScribe's ability to recognize when a document really needs saving. Word prompts the user to save a document even if the wrong one is pulled up and no changes have been made; DeScribe only asks the user to save if changes have been made or if the document has been printed—although we often tire of the need to save every time we print. Another unique feature is DeScribe's ability to perform two simultaneous search and replace operations. You may not need it often, but when you do it's quite handy.

Designer Delights

Aside from the awkward macro/hotkey assignments when using style sheets, we appreciated the overall design. Default document formats can be stored as layouts, akin to Wizards in Word for Windows. DeScribe ships with dozens of default layouts (such as Document, Memo, Letter and Fax) to get you started. Style sheets are part and parcel with layouts and are arranged in hierarchical fashion. For example, we designed a magazine article layout called Article. It has two major style branches called Article and Title. The Article style has sub-styles for formats such as standard paragraphs (such as this), subheadings and program listings. The Title has sub-styles for the deck (the descriptive paragraph about the



Automatic dialog box generation—our favorite gee whiz feature—is as easy as adding a field prompt and inserting a macro.

SPECIAL REPORT

article) and the author's byline.

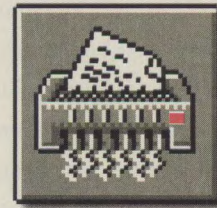
The header for each printed page of the article includes several automatically generated statistics such as the page number, total page count, revision number, document name, date and time. These help track revisions as printed copies move through various editing stages (most of us would still rather edit on paper than on screen). We also added a gee whiz feature: automatic dialog box generation for the title, deck and author byline. It's as simple as adding a field prompt in angle brackets (e.g. <<Author>>) and setting the document's open event macro to Prompts as shown in the screen shot at left. We became so enamored with this feature that we added similar dialog boxes for letters and memos, and each is attached to a stylesheet pegged for specific stationary. We also have been able to link the stationary manager to specific trays of our Lexmark 4039 10R.

Better yet, you can assign default attributes for customized File New selections. You specify a menu selection name, menu key, the layout to use, and a directory name. Thus, we can establish directories by document type or, in the case of magazine articles, a unique directory for each issue. DeScribe has the best imbedded document management we've seen since the late, lamented WordPerfect for OS/2—although even when WordPerfect is used with the optional OS/2 Integration Tools, DeScribe performs better and is far more stable.

Ironically, during our testing DeScribe ran more reliably than Word for Windows, and also had better document recovery features. For example, Word for Windows would often recover multiple versions of the same document, and tracking down the sometimes subtle differences was frustrating and time consuming. DeScribe always recovered a single file. As a bonus, you can tune DeScribe's automatic save using multiple parameters such as number of characters typed in addition to the more common timed saves.

When we receive documents from contributing writers, they arrive in a variety of formats. Like any other self respecting word processor, DeScribe is able to convert many of these formats without problems. We have, however, encountered some formatting problems when converting from older Word documents that make use of external stylesheets. These problems are minimal though, and can probably be attributed not to the Word conversion, but rather to DeScribe's confusion regarding another application's external stylesheets. Where DeScribe's ability to convert formats really impresses us, however, is conversion to Word for

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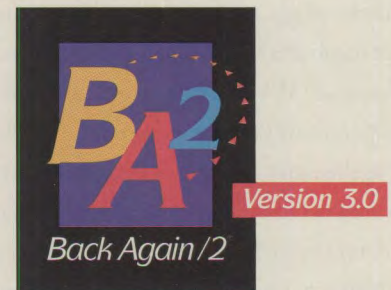
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More Multithreaded Mail Merges

DeScribe continues to enhance its integration with OS/2 Warp's features. As always, it supports long filenames under HPFS file systems (another straw). Recent maintenance versions have also added drag and drop support from an open document to a printer object—a very useful feature for faxing a document. And, as most OS/2 enthusiasts know, DeScribe is multithreaded. That may not make much difference for some users. After all, how many times do you really need to start modifying a document immediately after beginning a print run? Nevertheless, the multithreading was noticeable during some very busy editing sessions—particularly when loading documents. Some very long documents in a foreign format (such as Word for Windows) would take a minute or so to load. While waiting, we could open or edit another document.

We found one function where multithreading would be helpful if it ran more smoothly: mail merge. Whenever we ran a mail merge, our 16MB 486/33 machines became so bogged down that not only was it impractical to edit documents, but other applications also ran so slowly that they were nearly unusable.

Overall, mail merge was one of the least impressive features—

ing list with 500 names spools to the printer as 500 individual files. This wreaked havoc with our network printer as print jobs from other users mixed in with form letters. To be sure, there are times where this method would work nicely (as when disk space is tight and cannot hold a gigantic printer spool file), but DeScribe really needs an option to spool the entire merge as one file. While they're at it, an option to spool to a held file would be useful, too. That would give the user a chance to change paper from plain to letterhead before releasing the job. Fortunately, mail merge is not the mainstay of our work, and DeScribe will be working to fix these problems in future versions—a future that is looking brighter.

Marketing Strategy, at Last

Another handicap DeScribe was working against was its own controversial marketing tactics. Last year, when DeScribe announced all copies would expire with licensed sites receiving periodic extensions, we lobbied against this shortsighted tactic. Indeed, had that policy not changed, we would have selected a different platform. We were somewhat appeased when the policy changed to an unlimited expiration upon receipt of a signed license agreement.

However, even this strategy has its problems. Product that sits on a store shelf might expire before anyone receives it. Furthermore, if the company somehow bungles an update shipment (as

happened to us), properly licensed copies might become unusable before the update disks arrive. We seriously wondered whether DeScribe could survive in a market that typically rejects such policies. Fortunately, the product was already stable and productive enough that we believed the word processor would remain useful as is for years to come (we have, after all, used

Word for DOS 5.0 for more than five years).

Despite all the silly marketing gaffes at DeScribe, the company has now done something quite intelligent. It has made DeScribe enormously cheap and plentiful through its Voyager incarnation. The full 5.0 single user version is available on CD-ROM with the DeScribe User's Guide for between \$45 and \$50 at a gamut of outlets. To keep costs down, there's no refund or technical support for the package. DeScribe is now scampering to sell as much installed base as possible before IBM undercuts the product with the next version of SmartSuite.

While not perfect, DeScribe's unique strengths deserve all the attention it can muster.

particularly when retrieving data from large databases. With Paradox databases larger than a mere nine records, merge would not work at all. When we exported the list to dBASE or ASCII, merge operations (such as bringing up a field list) slowed significantly as the database size increased. When we would overwrite an exported database with an updated version (same format, different data) the document would sometimes lose its connection to the database, forcing us to rebuild the form letter.

Finally, when DeScribe sends a mail merge report to the printer, it sends each merged document independently. Thus, a mail-

SPECIAL REPORT

Besides the word processor, we also rely heavily on two remaining key productivity applications: spreadsheets and databases. DeScribe appears to be leading the way in the first category. It will be interesting to watch the remaining two legs of Warp's Triple Crown develop. Spreadsheets have two leading contenders—Athena and now IBM with its Lotus acquisition—while the database field remains wide open. Moreover, in the fast-paced software industry, these races are annual events. The question is, can DeScribe maintain its vigor in coming years? Can it compete against forthcoming suites, or even become the key to a new suite that could sweep the Triple Crown? We certainly hope so. Development continues, but at press time, no new version number or release date was known.

While not perfect, DeScribe's unique strengths deserve all the attention it can muster. There is no reason why DeScribe should now not be *de rigueur* on every Warp station. ♦

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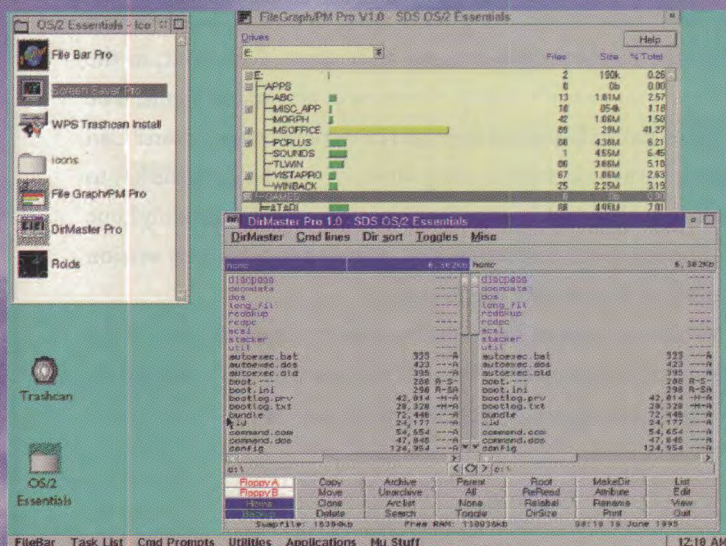
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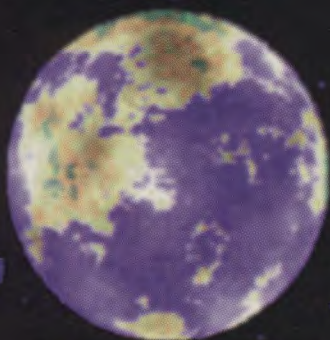
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DOT EXE

Software for OS/2

PRACTICAL POWERFUL: Performance Plus

With an emphasis on you and your individual system, Performance Plus provides customized optimization of OS/2.

BY GEOFFREY HOLLANDER

It started originally as a book about tuning OS/2, providing performance techniques for both the new and experienced user—something that most other OS/2 books didn't directly address.

Much more than a theoretical discussion of settings, options, their possible ranges and generic hardware configurations, this book focused on those things that would provide the best performance improvement for your specific system.

Before it was even published, it became software as well: the Performance Plus utilities package, now in version 3.0. The developer, Clear & Simple Inc., describes it as *A Tuning & Utility Kit for OS/2 Warp and 2.x*. Not just another bag o' tricks, Performance Plus is a unique OS/2 optimization system. The intent is for the software to implement the information in the book—not the reverse.

The book included in the package is, as promised, clear and simple. OS/2 system topics are defined and discussed in logical order by section: The Basics, The Details, DOS/Windows Optimizing and Software installation. Specific topics include: Elements of Performance (CPU, Memory, I/O Operations, Multitasking, Applications), File System Basics (HPFS vs. FAT) and complete Details Sections on Processor, Memory, I/O Operation, Multitasking and others. These, in turn, are broken down further, enabling you to pinpoint any specific OS/2 system setting you wish. Reading through this concise book (it can't really be called a manual) before

you begin, as suggested, will help you learn as you tune.

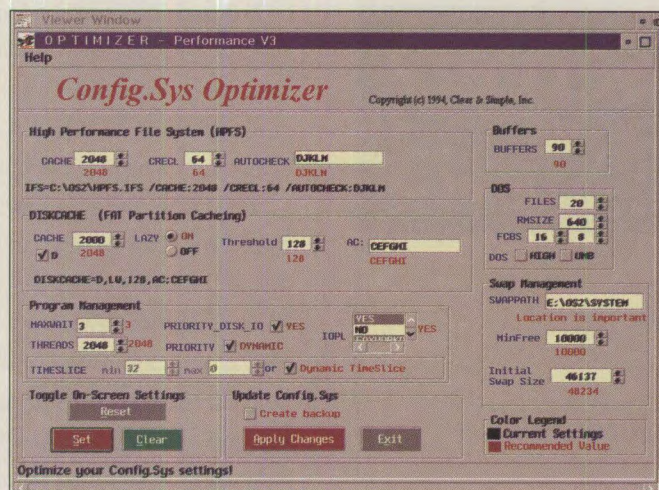
The emphasis of Performance Plus is on you and your individual system. This is immediately apparent when you install the utilities. Performance Plus asks you for your hardware particulars—CPU type, speed and memory configuration. Subsequent recommendations are based on those specifications.

Sequence is a key factor in tuning your system. First, run SimpleCT (Simple Count)—a measurement tool that starts a timer

and then performs basic processes focusing on video and program loading speed, disk access and CPU usage. SimpleCT is typically run before and after any tuning effort or change in your hardware. This first time will establish a definition of your basic OS/2 parameter performance and save the results in a log file for later analysis. Testing normally doesn't take long, although some systems will bog down during the video

sequence. Because video speed is limited by your hardware, SimpleCT provides an option to run the video test only once per test run—eight less than usual—or not at all. This is a particularly nice feature if you have already determined that your video setup is slow but want to further test on other levels. After a test is completed, you can review the results in numeric form or as any one of four chart styles.

Next, run the Optimizer, a program which displays a dialog



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26 OS/2 Professional September 1995

DOT EXE

box with all current settings and suggested changes for your CONFIG.SYS file. Suggested alterations are influenced by your system's resources and OS/2 version. Each settings field has a help panel associated with it to show you what effect each will have. All new values are checked to ensure that you can't enter an invalid CONFIG.SYS parameter. When you're finished, one press of the Apply button updates the CONFIG.SYS file. Optimizer will optionally make a backup of CONFIG.SYS so you can feel free to experiment.

The reporting tool of Performance Plus is called STATS. STATS graphically displays the data collected by SimpleCT(s) and shows them as increases or decreases of performance over previous tests. Comparative tests are described in two ways: as a percentage of performance change from one set of repetitions to another and as the percentage of change from your initial settings. This first group is always used as a base case. Information can be displayed in either numeric or chart format (bar, line and area graphs are offered). Test Category check boxes are provided which allow you to disable any category containing results that overwhelm the others.

For example, since video times often are much longer than other test results, they tend to exaggerate the graphs to the point where it becomes difficult to read other timings accurately. Coupled with SimpleCT, STATS is a very powerful tool for identifying and correcting bottlenecks in your system.

The DOS Black Box utility helps you optimize your DOS and Windows settings. Just drag and drop any program icon to the Black Box and specify a program category. Categories include: Text, Graphical, Windows, Communications, Games or Multimedia. You can also use multiple categories. By selecting Default, you can make all the settings revert to your OS/2 default DOS settings configuration. The OS/2 Migration Database can optionally be searched for usable settings as well.

If you prefer to work directly with the individual DOS and Windows settings, they are presented on the familiar OS/2 screen, but the descriptions are more thorough and easily understood. Even more important are the valuable configuration tips that accompany each one. Single button implementation of your settings completes the process—leaving the original object's settings intact.

The OS/2 Boot utility will create a single boot diskette or partition (new in 3.0). Quickly accomplished using a GUI interface that detects which version of OS/2 you're running (from 2.0 to Warp), this handy tool electively produces a second utility

DOT EXE

diskette that includes: CHKDSK, FORMAT, ATTRIB, FDISK and, in Warp, TEDIT (tiny editor).

DeskSave, as the name implies, saves your current desktop to either a diskette or separate fixed disk partition. DeskSave reproduces the OS/2 Desktop directory structure, then makes copies of the OS2.INI and OS2SYS.INI files. Finally, it creates a DESKRSTR.CMD file built specifically to restore your desktop from the OS/2 command prompt should the need arise.

Many other useful utilities come bundled with Performance Plus. SeeSwap monitors your swap file activity and growth to help you determine and adjust its correct size to avoid system-slowing fragmentation. AutoSet creates program objects and places them into your Startup Folder for execution every time you boot. Map (Disk Map) displays disk storage information: Drive ID, Partition type, Total Space, Free Space, Percent Free and Label. ViewBmp quickly displays up to six OS/2 bitmaps for you to drag and drop into the viewer (additional bitmaps are cycled in round robin fashion). Click on any of the displayed bitmaps to bring them up in a larger window.

Performance Plus 3.0 also includes several command-line utilities from version 2.1. Written in REXX, you get the source code to use as a sample for learning more about this powerful programming tool included with OS/2.

The Performance Plus tuning and utility kit is a definite must-have for both the OS/2 novice and power user alike. Even if you think your system is running at peak performance, it's never been more clear and simple to find out.

Geoffrey Hollander is the principal of MailPouch, a computer service bureau based in Lake Oswego, Oregon, that serves the direct mail marketing industry. He can be reached via CompuServe at 75202,3527.

AT A GLANCE:

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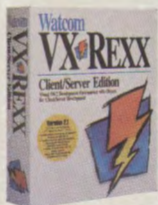
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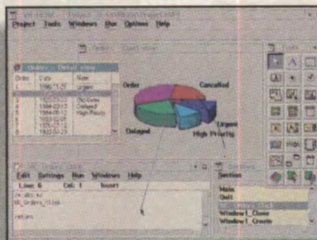
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For more information circle #100

Available through OS/2 EXPRESS

Info-Mining with OnCmd

Hidden beneath a single interface is the first language compilation system to bring the full power of OS/2 to the database programmer.

BY BILL NICHOLLS

OS/2 and OnCmd are both examples of the iceberg effect. Both programs hide a world of complexity under a simple user interface which, when explored, exposes the continents of that world one level at a time. A short review of such a system can only cover the highlights, leaving spelunking for details to the individual user. OnCmd is best described as an Application Programming System (APS), a collection of tools designed to deliver effective and reliable programs that meet business needs. The OnCmd APS includes a searchable reference in INF format, readme and release notes and icons for compiling and running useful samples of short programs rather than code segments. It also provides interactive database creation and screen painting, a Report Writer that handles most common report requirements and a linker for binding the modular program segments into a single file to reduce loading overhead. Easy migration to multiuser access is made possible by locking support in the single user product.

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While the above list isn't extraordinary in the world of language compilation systems, OnCmd is the first to bring the full power of OS/2 to the database programmer in a form not much more complex than the DOS compiler, Clipper. OnCmd's substantial accomplishment makes access to the full OS/2 API an understandable extension to the xBase syntax, and provides relatively easy access to such capabilities as multimedia, DDE, OS/2 graphics and even voice recognition. For the many small custom software firms that use xBase, an optional linker is available at extra cost to provide royalty free distribution of EXE files.

Another option, the OS/2 server module, makes client-server a simple upgrade from standalone applications. The server module is automatically detected and used by the standalone runtime, transparently converting the database access from local code to the server. This reduces the network traffic by performing index and sort actions on the server and sending only the desired data over the network. It is eminently simple to migrate from single user, via EXE distribution to multiuser, then further to full client-server operation. As long as the required file or record locking is in place, the basic application code can be made into multiuser and/or client-server simply by buying the appropriate modules.

As long as the required file or record locking is in place, the basic application code can be made into multiuser and/or client-server simply by buying the appropriate modules.

Less Than Perfect

OnCmd's printed documentation is weak in the area of OS/2 specifics. More than 80 percent of the 612 pages are the xBase commands and most of the rest is too brief to contain adequate information for someone unfamiliar with the product. The user must

find other sources of information and experiment to find out what works. The lack of "how to" documentation for anything beyond single xBase commands is the biggest obstacle to effective use of OnCmd. Examination of the code samples shows how, but not why.

A product as powerful as OnCmd needs a comprehensive documentation set to enable the broadest use of its capabilities. The current document needs to split out the 500 page reference section into a separate manual with a second manual specific to the OS and network issues.

No editor or Integrated Development Environment (IDE) is provided—not even the poor man's IDE: macros. Integration



While many APSes claim fast application development, OnCmd truly delivers easy to build programs that meet users' needs.

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with IBM's Workframe would also be useful. A user could supply a Make utility to handle many of these tasks automatically, but other major development platforms supply more integrated environments. Some form of IDE should be supplied, even if it is only Enhanced Editor macros.

All APS components are provided with an icon except for the compiler. The only way to perform a compile is from a command line in an OS/2 window. While this may be traditional, it fails to take advantage of OS/2. A compiler icon with a settings notebook page for source path and compile options would ease handling of multiple projects. With that, the programmer merely double clicks the appropriate icon to launch a compile. The user could supply this, but it should be available with the package.

Some additional glitches surfaced while exploring the APS. The Report Writer (RW) and Screen Painter (SP) have no entries in the samples directory, yet RW opens to that directory, while SP opens to the BIN directory. RW and SP icons also fail to respond to the standard double click or Alt-F4 close commands, requiring Alt-File, Exit choices instead. None of these items are show stoppers, yet their absence affects the user's comfort and productivity.

Real Productivity Gains

Report Writer and Screen Painter do provide a real productivity boost, especially for those all too frequent one-time special functions. Open a database, do some easy screen editing in RW and you can quickly build a specialized report. Once a report .FRM is created, most endusers could modify it for special needs with a small amount of training. This is double edged, so the original reports should be protected by read only flags and backup copies should be stored elsewhere. It's so simple even a manager could use it.

Screen Painter is more complex and probably not appropriate for enduser access. The complexity is a result of the real need for accurate editing of input fields to ensure database accuracy. Too often screen input is not checked adequately, leading to a slow accumulation of database errors and potential problems or loss of confidence in the application. SP makes it almost easy to completely check every field for accuracy, avoiding later problems.

Application development with OnCmd is reduced to a simple process. Start by defining the database structure using the interactive DB tool. Define the screen layouts and editing interactively with SP; ditto for reports with RW. Write a simple main program to call the appropriate screens and reports, compile the program with OC and run the program with OI, the interpreter.

DOT EXE

Simple applications can be finished in an afternoon; more complex projects in a week. The quicker the development, the easier it is for one person to do the whole job, further improving productivity. While this claim has been made by many APSes, OnCmd delivers it better than any other toolset I have used.

Multiplatform Support

The great majority of xBase users run under DOS and Windows, yet OnCmd directly supports only OS/2. While it might be reasonable to expect a small business to install one OS/2 system for use as a server, expecting them to convert all of their workstations to OS/2 flies in the face of economic reality. When asked about their plans for multiplatform support, On-Line Data, makers of OnCmd, were guarded about future plans. They do recognize the need, but could not confirm either a planned date or priority for other platforms.

Support for Windows and DOS is not directly available in the product, but hidden in the documentation are the specifications for DDE, DLL and Named Pipe interfaces. In fact, multiplatform support requires only named pipes, and those pipes can be driven via any NetBIOS network from DOS or Windows applications in a variety of languages. Warp Connect will support NetDDE, which could also be used over a network from other platforms, thereby extending client support to the larger base of systems currently using DOS and Windows.

The Acid Test

While some people will buy OnCmd for new programming, most buyers probably will have substantial libraries of existing code to port to OS/2, especially for use of the server option. A real test of OnCmd is the conversion of an application written under a different xBase APS. With the millions of existing xBase programmers, conversion will be the major use of OnCmd for some time to come.

Unfortunately, there is no documentation of the differences between OnCmd and the other xBase environments. Nor are there any utilities to review the source code and flag statements requiring conversion, or something to perform simple string substitution. The only way to find what needs to be changed is to compile the .PRG files and look at the .ERR files that are generated. Without assistance from conversion programs or smart editors the whole process is clumsy and slow. My hands on test of this effort was instructive.

I performed this test with a fairly large Clipper program consisting of 56 PRG files totalling 524K of source code. One sur-

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It's enough to turn a decent living programmer into a serial killer. Somebody out there had better come up with a solution.

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Now here's the best bit. A shareware version called Prominare Lite is freely available on the Internet. Help yourself to it and see how it beats the stink out of anything else. Then get your head around this question. If the shareware version is this good, what will the full version do?

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prise was the failure of OnCmd to recognize Clipper's use of M-> for MEMVAR. Substituting the full string solved that, but it should have been easy to include the abbreviation. With 56 files to change, a simple SED (Stream Editor) or REXX program to make those changes would be quite welcome.

The Clipper ELSEIF construct will need to be manually translated because neither ELSE nor ELSE IF create the same structure under OnCmd. Some syntax of COMMIT and CLOSE causes other errors that need attention. Given time, the conversion can be accomplished.

To Sum Up

With all the glitches I ran into, it's easy to overlook the real strengths of OnCmd. The compiler is robust even with hundreds of compile errors, the interactive tools are relatively easy to learn and the whole process is simple. OS/2 feature support is excellent, performance of both graphics and the interpreter are quite good and the structure of the product doesn't force anyone to buy more than is required. OnCmd moves xBase into the client-server world with the well designed transparent server upgrade.

OnCmd's main deficiencies are its lack of utilities and editor support, coupled with inadequate documentation for complex functions and OS/2 facilities. Support for DOS and Windows requires other tools, but simple named pipes will meet most needs. Taken as a whole, this product is a must for OS/2 environments and can be a fine server system in mixed DOS/Windows environments. ♦

Bill Nicholls has been in the computer industry for 30 years. He is active in OS/2 beta programs and has written for computer publications since 1986. He can be reached at billn@bix.com.

AT A GLANCE:

OnCmd xBase for OS/2

On-Line Data

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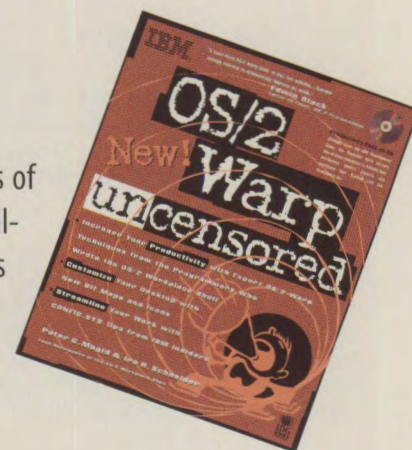
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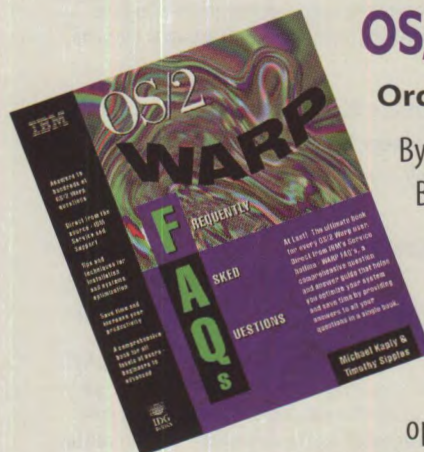


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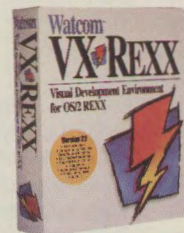
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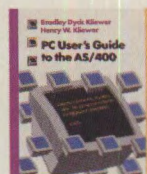
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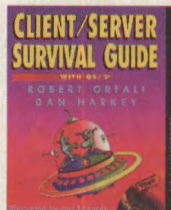
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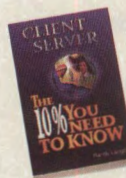


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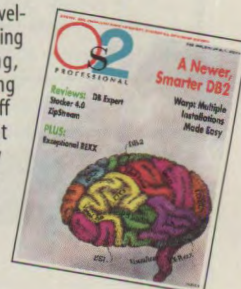
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Expiration Date



Rising Above the Tower of Babel

Globalink's PTP for OS/2 enhances the fluency of your multilingual communications.

BY MYRON SLOBODA

Never before has instant global communication been so easy and accessible. What with the advent of the World Wide Web, the popularization of e-mail on the Internet and the increasing globalization of the business world, the time has never been better for the emergence of a powerful foreign language translation software such as Power Translator Professional (PTP) from Globalink, Inc. Happily, PTP is also one of those native OS/2 products that fits seamlessly into OS/2's enhanced environment and operating features.

PTP's basic operating principle is simple: the user enters a text in one language and the software translates it into another. If you're fluent in two languages, your first reaction to this statement probably is a valid skepticism. With the problems of metaphors, colloquialisms, idioms and perhaps most importantly contextualization, translations are inherently difficult for humans, let alone automated machines.

Power Translator surmounts these difficulties with its dictionary structure. The software comes with an impressive 250,000+ user-modifiable general word and phrase dictionary. To this the user can add modifiable subject dictionaries that contain additional technical, professional, and idiomatic termi-

nology specific to a particular field. Globalink is working on an ever expanding library of these additional dictionaries—presently, additional subject dictionaries are available for automotive, industrial, computer and chemical fields. Translation can be either interactive (i.e., word by word or line by line), or through importing an entire document ASCII file. The translation process itself is a fast 20,000+ words per hour.

PTP consists of two main programs: a Translation Manager and a Dictionary Manager. Both managers offer bilingual menu selections with clean, simple and intuitive interfaces. The Translation Manager allows the user to set basic preferences for a document, perform simple editing functions and provides access for customizing the subject dictionary. The ability to customize the subject dictionary, which is the primary purpose of the Dictionary Manager, is what gives PTP its advantage when dealing with documents of any sophistication. The Dictionary Manager allows the user to update both single words as well as semantic units (multi-word-, noun-, verb- and adjective- phrases). During an actual translation PTP flags any unknown words, which allows for easy identification for dictionary updating.

By fully exploiting native





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Unite development objects for image viewing, scanning and CD-ROM and Optical jukebox management; and, UniteLite, a desktop imaging solution for OS/2 Warp.

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For more information circle #4

Available through OS/2 Express

50 OS2 Professional September 1995

HANDS ON

OS/2 environment features, PTP can perform simultaneous translation sessions and offer access to the Dictionary and Translation Manager directly from the Workplace Shell. Most importantly, it allows the user to engage in other tasks while the text translates in the background. PTP has LAN Server support and is compatible with most OCR software and scanners.

My own experience is with the German to/from English version and the business and finance subject dictionary. The main program comes on 10 3.5-inch disks—three for the Translation Manager, six for the Dictionary Manager and one for LAN Server support.

The business and finance subject module comes on an additional four disks. The main program and the additional subject module required about 30MB of hard disk space. Installation for me was problem free. The installation program interface itself is nice, and since it's threaded you can run other programs during installation. PTP also comes with a deinstallation utility.

My only complaint about Power Translator Professional is its current lack of import and export filters for the OS/2 version, which would convert a document automatically into your word processor's format. The development team assured me, however, that they are working on filters for major word processors.

PTP is available for German, French, Spanish and Russian translations; other language modules also are being developed. It comes on non-copy protected floppy disks or CDs. PTP supports a wide variety of platforms including DOS, Macintosh, OS/2, Unix, Windows and Windows NT.

An important tool for anyone dealing in multilingual communications, Power Translator Professional for OS/2 is an excellent native product with a strong future and one I wholeheartedly recommend. ♦

Myron Sloboda has a PhD in philosophy from the University of Toronto and is a formal consultant for Online Construction and Exploration Canada.

AT A GLANCE:

Power Translator Professional for OS/2

Globalink Incorporated

9302 Lee Highway, 12th Floor

Fairfax, Virginia 22031-1208

703-273-5600, fax: 703-273-3866

List Price: \$199



MARKETLINE

Product News for the OS/2 User

SCOOPS

Rhino Releases

As this issue hits the street, Rhintek, Inc. will be gearing up to release several new communications programs.

RhinoCom 1.5 is set to ship in early September and the first release of its scaled down sibling, RhinoCom Jr., will debut in October, the company says.

Paying attention to users' requests and wish lists, Rhintek has added several new features to RhinoCom 1.5.

"What really attracts people to RhinoCom is its configurabil-

ity, so we're trying to build a communications product that allows you to do whatever you want," says Rhintek spokesperson Kristin McCown.

The new version will feature an automatic script learning feature and will permit global settings changes.

"With the current version (RhinoCom 1.1) if you get a new modem, for example, you have to change the settings on each RhinoCom object.

Global settings will allow users to change the settings for

all of the objects at once," says McCown. An improved host mode with Digiboard support for multiple incoming lines is also featured in the upcoming version.

Citing Warp's growing foothold in the home market, Rhintek is also releasing RhinoCom Jr. "We recognize that home users don't have the same needs as corporate users, so we decided to put together a more accessible, less expensive product," says McCown.

"We've received a lot of

feedback from users who only use the product at home, so with the scaled-down version we are gearing up for the home market," adds McCown.

Later this fall Rhintek plans to unveil a WWW site and a BBS for product information and feedback. The BBS will run using RhinoCom 1.5's host mode, allowing prospective buyers to check out the program's host mode interface.

News

Don't Blink

Peloria Technology is working to get its Mail Scout for OS/2 out the door before you read this issue. A free upgrade that automatically forwards your e-mail to a new address, leaving intact its origins (the to/from headers) instead of replacing them with your own old e-mail i.d. is slated to closely follow the original release.

Mail Scout for OS/2—a personal assistant for e-mail that, like IBM's WorkGroup or Lotus's cc:Mail—uses agent technology for elaborate message scheduling. For instance, explained Jennifer Guzman, the company's head of new business development,

Mail Scout will remind you and/or the sender about e-mail you were expecting that's "past due." Or its "vacation rule" will send messages out to all your clients telling them who to contact in the meantime. Unlike cc:Mail or WorkGroup, however, Mail Scout runs on a server so users don't have to log in and leave their e-mail running in order to use the rules functions.

"It's written especially for the executive who is never in the office or who never checks his e-mail anyway," Guzman says. Peloria developed Mail Scout for OS/2, she said, because of customer demand and to make the product work with Lotus

Notes in the future.

Guzman said Peloria Technology's other plans include more work with agent technology, two-way paging, MS Mail and voice technology. And she doesn't expect business to slow down. In fact, Guzman said to watch for a new version of Mail Scout that will handle "aging messages," among other things, to emerge by year's end. "That's my schedule," Guzman conceded. "Maybe we'd better say first quarter."

Stepped up support

OS/2 2.1 users will have until February of 1996 to migrate over to new versions of OS/2. IBM announced that it will

continue to support customers using version 2.1 until February when service will be available on a fee basis.

Many companies are in the process of upgrading thousands of workstations to the latest OS/2 products. "We understand our customer's needs and the time required to make the migration and we intend to support them," says Martha Gimbut, director of Technical Service & Support, IBM Personal Software Products.

Strike up the band

An agreement between IBM's British development partner, Multimedia Archive and Retrieval Systems, pcl

MARKETLINE

(MARS) and EMI, will have many OS/2 advocates tapping their feet to the beat of another unique deployment of their favorite OS.

The deal is specifically between KPM, the EMI division that provides music for film, television, video and advertising, and MARS.

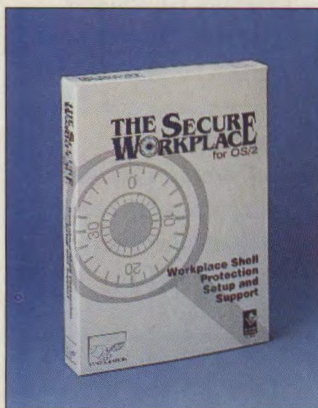
Using OS/2 and IBM's Digital Library technology, MARS and IBM jointly developed a system for media producers to access music online for inclusion in productions. With the aid of their multimedia-ready PCs and a modem, producers can sample "rough" versions of music for

film, television or other uses. They can then immediately file an online copyright clearance form and, with appropriate licensing clearance, download a broadcast ready selection of music.

"MARS chose to use OS/2 on the client end of the operation because of the OS's mul-

timedia and multitasking abilities," says John Prial, manager of Digital Library Market Development. Negotiations with music and other rights owners currently are underway so that producers will be able to access such materials as sound effects and photo libraries, says Prial.

New Products



Secure Workplace provides several levels of security options to protect your desktop.

Lock it up

SYNTEGRATION now is shipping Secure Workplace for OS/2, version 3.0. The utility provides several levels of security options to protect the user's desktop. Billed as a product that will protect a setup from children, colleagues, beginners and others, Secure Workplace includes templates that can secure and restrict programs and folders as well as create password folders.

Users decide which level of security to create by checking boxes that provide options such as lock, no copy, no move, no shadow, no rename, no delete, etc., for any object

in the Workplace Shell. In addition to protection, the software includes object management and editing, workplace backup, restore and restart, system shutdown, window list management and remote installation and configuration services.

A Standard Edition is \$59.95. The Enterprise Edition with a 10-station license minimum is \$549.

SYNTEGRATION, 13241 Norton Ave., Chino, CA 91710. (909) 464-9450, fax (909) 627-3541. Internet: 73707.3331@compuserve.com.

CDs Unite

Cirrus Technology is shipping OS/2-specific CD-ROM mastering software products called the Unite CD Maker and the Unite Storer. The latter product is the older of the two and is designed for jukebox management.

The CD Maker permanently saves critical data from your desktop to a compact disk and can solve backup, archive and distribution problems, the company

says. Unite CD Maker was designed for IBM's OS/2 Workplace Shell and SOM (System Object Model) technology, and features multithreaded performance.

Offering two methods to burn a CD-ROM—either "on the fly" or by building a virtual CD image file—Unite CD Maker conforms to the ISO 9660 universal mastering standard. Its CDs can be read from any OS/2, DOS or Windows system. List price is \$249.

Cirrus Technology, Inc., 5301 Buckeystown Pike, Fourth Floor, Frederick, MD 21701. (301) 698-1900 or (800) 272-1135, fax (301) 698-1909.

The TWAIN shall meet

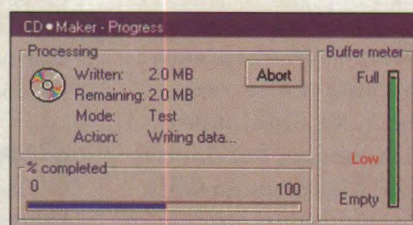
Industry standard TWAIN now is available for OS/2,

enabling applications to use any TWAIN supported imaging device, such as a camera or scanner. According to Solution Technology, Inc. (STI), TWAIN for OS/2 supports almost any resolution image in black and white up through 24-bit color without image size restrictions.

Primarily aimed at imaging software developers and scanner manufacturers, TWAIN tools include: the TWAIN SDK, an application enabling kit that allows you to write the interface between the application and the TWAIN.DLL for OS/2. It comes with all required and optional DLLs, samples and one scanner driver. Cost of the SDK is \$695.

TWAIN DDK is a scanner and image source manufacturer's kit for developing 32-bit TWAIN for OS/2 scanner drivers. It costs \$4,995 and comes with a year of tech support.

STI also offers various scanner, subdriver, imaging library kits and products such as APPLAUSE, an image scanning, printing and file conversion utility and GENIE, an automated data-

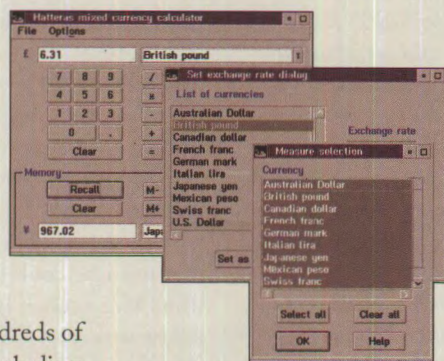


Unite CD Maker solves archive, back up and distribution problems.

Measure pleasure

ConversionWidgets, the first product from Hatteras software to support VisualAge development, is a complete reuse library, or toolbox, offering hundreds of conversion utilities including area, weight, volume, distance and currency exchanges. ConversionWidgets allows the user to perform calculations with several mixed units.

In addition to support for unusual measurements, the product also allows developers to add new conversions or to extend the product through its source code. Sample applica-



Conversion Widgets supports Visual Age development and includes source code to allow developers to add new conversion utilities.

tions include a mixed currency calculator and a reusable number pad. Cost is \$295.

Hatteras Software, 2000 Regency Parkway, Suite 230, Cary, NC 27511. (919) 319-3816, fax (919) 319-3877.

entry system that allows image-assisted data entry and validation.

APPLAUSE is \$199 for the HP version and \$149 for the Logitech version. GENIE, customized for individual systems, generally runs from \$7,000 to \$30,000 depending on the number of clients and servers and the system's complexity.

Solution Technology, Inc., 1101 S. Rogers Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33487. (407) 241-3210, fax (407) 997-6518.

CCC's please

Softool Corporation is now shipping the latest version of its native CM solution for OS/2 developers—CCC/Manager 3.0. Improvements of the new release include a speed increase of 100 percent for check-in and check-out func-

tions, improved access control and reporting capabilities and an optimized fast migration function.

Restructuring of CCC/Manager's underlying code allows greater portability across PC platforms including OS/2, Windows and Windows NT. The CM tool also supports change and configuration management of UNIX and Macintosh source code from the OS/2 platform. CCC/Manager 3.0 is \$495 per single license with quantity discounts available.

Softool Corporation, 340 Kellogg Ave., Goleta, CA 93117. (805) 683-5777, fax (805) 683-4105.

Number cruncher

Avista is shipping a new Payroll module for its account-

ing and business management software package. Called "Avista" for the DOS, OS/2, UNIX, AIX and HP-UX platforms, the Payroll module maintains transaction-level accounting functions.

Two software "granules" make up the Payroll module. The Basic Payroll granule provides "after the fact" payroll functions and allows smaller companies to print computer-generated payroll checks, summarize data for tax reporting and automatically post payroll information to Avista's General Ledger system.

The Payroll Calculations granule automatically tracks salary, hourly wages, sick time and other pay-related calculations and automatically processes 401k and Section 125 contributions, FICA and Medicare withholding, garnishments, loans, insurance, matching contributions and other spe-

state or local tax laws. The Basic Payroll granule is \$400; Payroll Calculations is \$600. The Tax Update Service is \$500 annually for customers who do not subscribe to the maintenance plan.

Avista Software, One Meca Way, Norcross, GA 30093. (404) 564-8000, fax (404) 564-8010.

Pick and choose

System Commander's update, version 2.0—a utility that lets you test operating systems on your system while protecting your current setup—allows users to have 102 Intel-compatible operating systems on a single PC.

System Commander does not require repartitioning or a partition of its own; it also uses no resident memory. In addition to security features that protect all operating systems, hard disk and floppy drives and setup menus, System Commander includes

specific instructions on how to protect your system from Windows 95.

The cost is \$99.95 and includes a 60-day unconditional money back guarantee.

V Com-

munications Inc., 4320 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 120, San Jose, CA 95129. (408) 296-4224, fax (408) 296-4441. ♦



System Commander lets you test operating systems while protecting your current setup.

cial payroll transactions.

Also, users who join the Tax Update Service through Avista Solutions Centers can receive software updates following changes to any federal,

INPUT

continued from page 13

and operating system (DOS/Windows for Workgroups) that I run at home. So far, it's no contest. The DOS/WfWG setup runs rings around the WIN-OS/2 configuration I use.

Jack Lavelle
via the Internet

Several people have misunderstood our comments about not owning any Windows-based software. We meant as a company for our own internal operations. All those apps, such as Paradox, DeScribe or Quark Express, are all either DOS, OS/2, or Mac-based (for graphics). However, our magazine is up to its ears in Windows software that we test, review, and write about, including Windows 95. Some 85 percent of our corporate IS readers support Windows software that must interact with OS/2. We previously ran a column called

Windows Unlatched about maximizing Windows programs under OS/2. And we continue to analyze and write about good and bad Windows experiences within the context of OS/2-based systems. That's the editorial department's job. Our point to IBM Advertising was that our advertising department should not have to purchase a copy of Windows Excel to fill out an application to run Warp advertising. We refused and were probably the only publication among hundreds in the country.—Edwin Black

OS/2'd out

Bravo to Jerry Pournelle's May editorial [*Hard Disk Hangups*]. I too have discovered the dreaded "FAT lazy-writer" error. Frankly, this is the last straw for me regarding OS/2. It took me more than 100 hours to get Warp working on my home PC. Many frustrating hours were spent downloading

fixes at my expense. I foolishly installed a new hard drive and Warp now refuses to install. My three month support period is up, and I really don't want to go through another round of calling tech support, downloading and applying fixes anyway! Windows never looked so good!

I configure computers for a living, but nothing could have prepared me for the OS/2 ordeal. It should be clear to all by now that OS/2 is still a beta product. Microsoft was smart enough to call Win95 a beta before launching a mass distribution effort. Needless to say I will not even consider OS/2 for use at the workplace.

Adios, OS/2. Do you know of any way I can file for a refund on this miserable product? Great magazine, bad operating system.

Ed Malone
via America OnLine ♦

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Get SMART

One Up Corporation's toolset can take the chaos out of porting Windows applications to OS/2.

BY CAREY GREGORY

Despite the many technological and usability advantages OS/2 Warp offers over Windows 3.1, IBM has encountered difficulty in convincing developers to produce native OS/2 applications. The market realities are simple: Windows 3.1 has a huge percentage of the installed base on PC platforms and developing competitive applications these days is an expensive, time-consuming proposition. Central to IBM's strategy for jumpstarting the development of native OS/2 applications is One Up Corporation's Source Migration Analysis Reporting Toolset, or simply SMART. Initially offered as a fairly costly retail package, SMART is now provided at no additional cost on IBM's *Developer Connection for OS/2 CD*.

SMART is a set of tools designed to ease the migration of applications written for one platform to another. Using a flexible, knowledge-base design, SMART provides support for migrating source code to OS/2 Warp from Windows 3.1, Win32 and OS/2 1.3. It also provides a decent programmer's editor and the ability to define your own migration database in order to handle those items not addressed by SMART's built-in database.

SMART uses a two-step, iterative process for migrating source code. Step one is an analysis phase that scans your source code for functions and data types SMART knows are operating system specific. It then generates a set of reports that summarizes the number and types of items SMART has identified as portability issues and assigns an estimated level of effort to the migration process.

According to the online documentation, the level of effort value calculated for the analysis report is "a relative number related to the number of hours required to complete the migration." Based on my experience porting a large Windows application using SMART, SMART

LISTING 1

```
// LRESULT ViewWin::DefWindowProc(UINT msg,
//      WPARAM wParam, LPARAM lParam)      SM$:O
LRESULT ViewWin::DefWindowProc(UINT msg,
//      WPARAM wParam, LPARAM lParam) // SM$:M2
//      SM$:C
// WPARAM - Cat:020 Type:040 Area:940      SM$:K
// Replace with either MPARAM or UINT      SM$:S
//      SM$:C
// LPARAM - Cat:020 Type:040 Area:940      SM$:K
// Replace with either MPARAM or LONG      SM$:S
//      SM$:C
// LRESULT - Cat:020 Type:040 Area:940      SM$:K
// Replace with either APIRET or LONG      SM$:S
//      SM$:C
// DefWindowProc-Cat:020 Type:010 Area:210 SM$:K
// Replace with WinDefWindowProc          SM$:S
```

LISTING 2

```
// if (ViewParent->Font) {                      SM$:O
//      HDC.SelectObject(*(ViewParent->Font)); SM$:O
if (ViewParent->Font) {                          //SM$:M3
//      HDC.SelectObject(*(ViewParent->Font)); //SM$:M3
//      SM$:C
// SelectObject - Cat:030 Type:010 Area:410 SM$:K
// Replace with appropriate Gpi function
//      depending upon the                      SM$:L
// type of resource that is being selected: SM$:L
//      Brush -GpiSetColor, GpiSetPatternSet,
//      GpiSetAttrs                          SM$:L
//      Pen -GpiSetLineType, GpiSetLineWidth, SM$:L
//      GpiSetLineWidthGeom                  SM$:L
//      Font -GpiSetCharSet, GpiCreateLogFont SM$:L
//      Bitmap - GpiSetBitmap                  SM$:L
//      Palette - GpiSelectPalette              SM$:L
```

LISTING 3

```
// nRet = GetCommError(lp->nConnID, lpStat); SM$:O
```


CODE CACHE

provides a reasonable estimate. However, you must also account for more subtle factors such as architectural issues, complexity, "cleanliness" of the code and what consideration the original developers gave to portability issues.

The level of effort assigned by SMART is derived by assigning a category to each item requiring changes. The category assignments are based on the level of difficulty required to migrate the item to the target platform. The categories themselves are worth discussing in detail—each follows in increasing order of difficulty.

Level 0

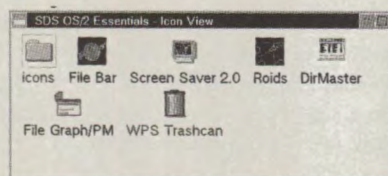
Level 0 items have an exact keyword match in the target platform, although the size or type typically changes. An example would be the **HWND** data type. Windows and OS/2 both define and use the data type for the same purpose. However in Windows **HWND** is 16 bits, while in OS/2 it's 32 bits. Although such differences will seldom affect your code *syntactically*, many applications

```
nRet = GetCommError(lp->nConnID, lpStat); // SM$:M3
//                                     SM$:C
// GetCommError - Cat:030 Type:010 Area:100 SM$:K
// Replace with DosDevIOctl using category
//                                     IOCTL_ASYNC SM$:L
// with function ASYNC_GETCOMMSTATUS or
//                                     ASYNC_GETCOMMERROR. SM$:L
// Use ASYNC_GETINQUECOUNT and
// ASYNC_GETOUTQUECOUNT to SM$:L
// retrieve the current queue counts.
// Use the file handle SM$:L
// from the DosOpen call on the
// communications port. SM$:L
//                                     SM$:C
// Windows: SM$:X
// COMSTAT ComStat; SM$:X
// int iError =
//     GetCommError (ComID, &ComStat); SM$:X
// OS/2: SM$:X
// BYTE cStatus; SM$:X

// DosDevIOctl (hFile, IOCTL_ASYNC,
// ASYNC_GETCOMSTATUS, SM$:X
// NULL, 0, NULL, (PVOID)&cStatus,
// sizeof(cStatus), NULL); SM$:X
```

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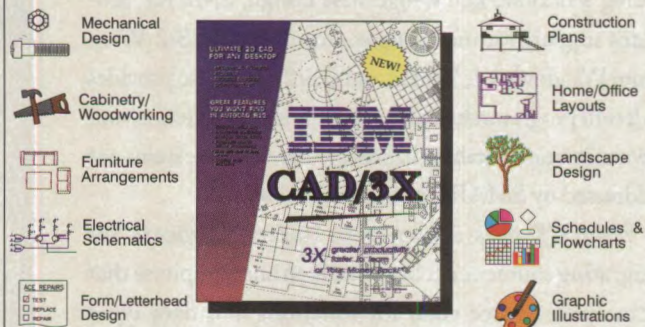
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minimum (4 MB recommended), DOS 3.3 or higher

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CODE CACHE

store such items in unlikely places using a generic data type such as an *unsigned int* or *short*. This creates potential for problems because the type casting may go unnoticed and cause truncation, and if it's placed in a structure, the size of the structure will change. You may also find, as I did, that Level 0 items may be written to a file or otherwise stored externally to the program. This can be a *major* problem if you must maintain compatibility with existing versions of the application.

Level 10

Items reported as Level 10 are literal replacements from one platform to the other. While an equivalent definition exists in the target platform, the actual keyword must be changed. SMART will change the keyword for you; however, I have often found that the change creates more work than it saves. For example, SMART will change the Windows keyword **LPSTR** to its OS/2 equivalent **PSZ**. While this may improve the general appearance and "OS/2-ness" of your code, it serves no functional purpose. I generally find that it's far more productive to create a list of all Level 10 items identified by SMART and supply compatible **typedefs**

rather than change each occurrence. You can get a list of all Level 10 items from SMART's analysis report. Unfortunately, SMART won't generate the **typedefs** for you. This would be an extremely useful feature.

Level 20

When equivalent functionality exists in the target platform but the parameters or structure members change, SMART assigns Level 20. Although SMART will tell you what changes are needed, you must make them yourself.

Level 30

Level 30 covers those sections where the equivalent functionality exists in both platforms, but the procedure requires more or fewer API calls. This category also includes items that may have several different implementations depending on the parameters used.

Level 40

Some items have equivalent functionality in the target platform, but require logic changes. These are assigned Level 40; Windows' `CreatePatternBrush()` is an example. I generally found that dur-

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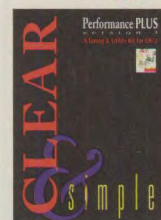
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ing the migration phase it was helpful to enable SMART's option to insert example code for these items. Though not always viable, more often than not SMART's suggested solution was workable.

Level 50

If SMART's analysis report shows a large number of items in Level 50, you will definitely have your work cut out for you. This category represents items for which equivalent functionality doesn't exist on the target platform. In other words, you're going to have to write it yourself.

Level 999

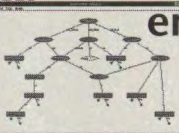
SMART's documentation describes this category as "The database does not currently have a complete description for the migration of the keyword." In an analysis of more than 60,000 lines of some of the ugliest Windows code I've ever seen, nothing ever appeared in this category, so I'm puzzled as to what it really means.

Migration

Assuming you've selected the correct options, SMART performs

the source code migration immediately following the analysis. The general approach is to replace lines of code using comments or `#ifdefs`, and to insert prototypes, example code, and/or templates immediately after the original code. Each removed line and each inserted line is tagged with a special marker to make it easy to identify. The methods used to modify the code may be configured by the user from the migration options dialog box.

Listing 1 shows a fragment of C++ code migrated by SMART. The line tagged with the string "SM\$:O" represents the original code. The line with the tag "SM\$:M2" is code inserted by SMART as a replacement. The **commented** lines following are explanatory notes inserted by SMART. Notice that SMART detected the fact that the function's return type needed to be replaced, and that the **WPARAM** and **LPARAM** data types represented Windows data types that corresponded to the **MPARAM** type in OS/2. There are, however, two flaws in this example. The first is perhaps minor, although it has a large impact on the amount of work required to port the application. SMART didn't make the suggested changes for us, even though it clearly



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understood what needed to be done. The second, and far more serious flaw, is that it interpreted a C++ class member as a Windows API function. While this function may or may not be a functional equivalent of **DefWindowProc()**, the fact that it's a member of an application-defined class means, *by definition*, that it cannot be a Windows API function. Clearly, SMART does not fully understand C++.

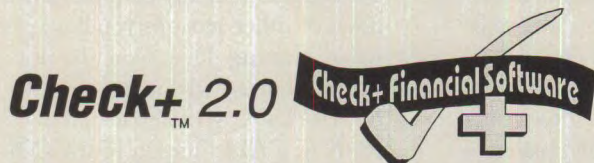
Listing 2 shows another fragment of C++ code migrated by SMART. (Again the comment tags have been inserted by SMART as in Listing 1.) Listing 2 demonstrates the value of turning on long comments in SMART for the more difficult categories. Even though the migration of the **SelectObject()** function is non-trivial, SMART provided excellent guidance in the explanatory comments.

Listing 3 shows a fragment of C code migrated by SMART that again demonstrates the excellent knowledge base provided by SMART. Few programmers are familiar with OS/2's **DevIOctl()** function, and many would have been hard pressed to port the Windows **GetCommError()** function correctly with-

out this assistance.

Clearly SMART has its drawbacks, but overall, it is an excellent product that will definitely reduce the time and cost associated with any Windows to OS/2 port. Its power is largely limited not by the design or implementation of the product itself, but by the quality of the code it is given to analyze. Next month we'll take a look at some of the intricacies and pitfalls of porting applications from 16-bit real mode systems to the 32-bit protected mode world, and how to ensure that your next application will port easily to virtually any system without breaking your schedule in the meantime. ♦

Carey Gregory is the president of Gateway Technologies Corporation of Canton, Connecticut, a consulting and software development firm specializing in OS/2, Win32 (and UNIX on alternate Tuesdays). He can be reached via the Internet at careyg@bix.com or on CompuServe at 71034,2205.



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Tips and Techniques for the OS/2 Professional

Reaching Warp Speed

BY HERB TYSON

Many OS/2 users have discovered that Warp boots more slowly than previous versions. The reason is that Warp changes the way memory is managed—immediately swapping system files to OS/2's virtual memory file (SWAPPER.DAT) during bootup. While this frees up memory for programs and speeds up their loading time, it slows the bootup cycle as a tradeoff. There's no way to change Warp's basic startup behavior, but this month's column will present some steps to speed it up.

The first thing you can do to reduce bootup time is increase the amount of physical RAM installed in your computer. In order to boot up, OS/2 has to load a number of programs and dynamic link libraries: about 8 to 10MB in a typical Warp system.

If you have only 4MB of RAM, then OS/2 must begin moving loaded programs into SWAPPER.DAT before it can finish loading the operating system. Depending on the speed of your hard disk, this takes a lot of time. If you have 8MB of RAM, OS/2 still has to move memory to disk before it can finish loading the operating system, but not as much. Above 12MB, however, OS/2 has enough room to load the whole operating system before it resorts to swapping.

As a practical matter, the more activities you can do without—such as starting unnecessary programs, loading unnecessary files, etc., the more you can speed up OS/2's boot time. Eliminating excess will not only boost boot time performance, but system performance as well. Let's take a look at the kinds of activities and memory-intensive factors that add not only to boot time but to sluggish OS/2 performance throughout the session.

If you were ever burned by corrupted OS2.INI and OS2SYS.INI files while using previous versions of OS/2, then you probably very quickly enabled OS/2 Warp's new archive feature. Located in the Desktop settings notebook, the archive keeps a running backup of the last three generations of your Desktop. For the most part, this is a welcome feature. However, archiving takes additional time each time you boot. You probably don't notice it after turning on archiving for the first time, because upon first reboots you're dealing only with the first generation backup. Once three backup cycles have been created, however, OS/2 has to manage all of those archive sets each time you boot up. For a typical system, this insurance usually adds 30 seconds to a minute to bootup time.

A workable compromise is to enable the archive feature selectively, leaving it turned off most of the time. Some users, for example, make a habit of enabling archiving one day a week—turning it off once the current Desktop setup is archived. Others enable the archive feature only after making major setup changes that would be difficult or time-consuming to recreate. Users who back up their systems to tape on a daily basis often skip the archive feature altogether.

Change the state of the archive feature.

- Open the Settings notebook for the Desktop.
- Click the Archive tab.
- Click the checkbox to enable or disable the Create archive at each system restart option.

By default, OS/2 automatically

restarts programs that were open at the last system shutdown. If you don't like that feature or if you prefer it for only certain programs, you can disable the automatic restart feature.

Disable automatic program restart feature.

- Add the following line to your CONFIG.SYS file:
SET RESTARTOBJECTS=STARTUP-FOLDERONLY

Now only objects in your Startup folder will begin running upon reboot. This means that any command windows or other sessions you have open when shutting down won't be restarted (unless they are in your STARTUP.CMD file or started using RUN or CALL lines in your CONFIG.SYS file). The RESTARTOBJECTS line affects only those applications that are open when you perform a shutdown.

Another culprit behind slow boot times is the fonts feature. OS/2 comes with a number of fonts—Courier, Times New Roman, Helvetica, and various system fonts—that are considered essential for most users. In addition, however, some programs (such as Lotus 123 for OS/2) come with a number of optional ATM fonts you can add. Many users routinely add these fonts without giving them a second thought.

Give them that second thought. Those extra fonts not only consume memory, but take additional loading time when booting OS/2. After adding more than 50 such fonts to my system, the boot time rose dramatically. Just trimming the fonts back to the base

I.S. NOTEBOOK

fonts that come with OS/2 reduced the bootup time by nearly a minute.

Remove unnecessary fonts.

- Open the Font Palette in the System Setup folder.
- Click the Edit font button. Next, click the Delete button.
- In the list of font files, click the fonts you want to remove.
- Once you've selected the fonts you want to remove, click the Delete button and follow the prompts.

OS/2 also provides the option to delete or retain the associated files, just in case you want the option of reloading the font at some other time without having to dig out the original diskettes.

OS/2 defaults to a conservatively small SWAPPER.DAT file. In most

cases, OS/2 almost immediately has to expand SWAPPER.DAT as it moves system .DLLs from memory to the virtual memory file. Increasing SWAPPER.DAT's initial size saves time during bootup. Additionally, since OS/2 no longer has to try to dynamically shrink and expand SWAPPER.DAT anymore, OS/2 will be faster at other times as well.

You should set SWAPPER.DAT's initial size to the maximum size it will ever attain in normal operation. On a system with 16MB of RAM loaded with multimedia, Internet tools and WIN-OS/2, I recommend an initial size of 32MB. That might seem high, since OS/2's installation default probably was about 2MB. However, if you observe the size of SWAPPER.DAT, you'll see it rise frequently above 20MB; sometimes approaching 30MB—especially if you use the Internet utilities and

applications such as Word and Excel under WIN-OS/2. By setting SWAPPER.DAT's initial size to 32MB, OS/2 will almost never have to service it to make it larger or smaller, reducing the time needed to perform basic housekeeping.

Adjust the size of your SWAPPER.DAT file.

If you have 16MB of RAM, your default setting is probably as follows:
SWAPPATH=C:\OS2\SYSTEM
2048 2048

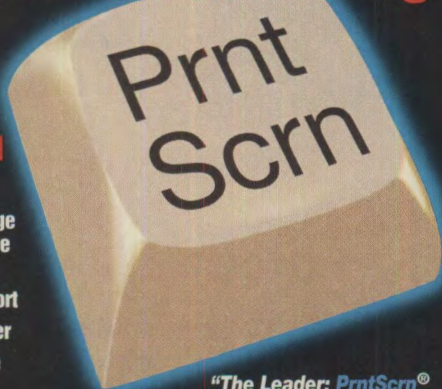
This line causes SWAPPATH to be created in the C:\OS2\SYSTEM directory, with an initial size of 2048K (the second occurrence of 2048 in that line, about 2MB). The first 2048 specifies the warning point for low disk space on C:. If the amount of free space falls

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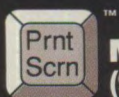
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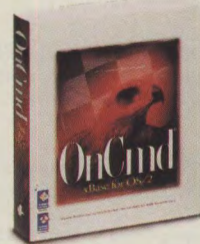
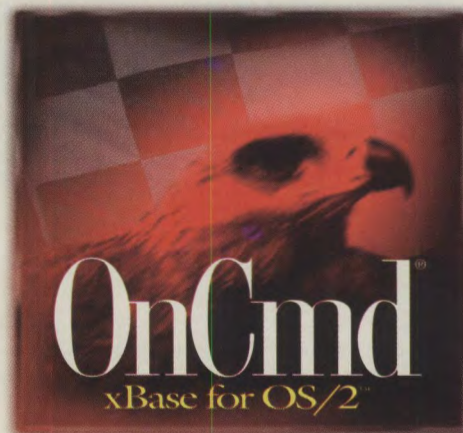
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below 2048K, OS/2 will warn that you are about to run out of disk space. To increase that setting to 10240K and to raise the initial size of SWAPPER.DAT to 32MB, change the line to:

SWAPPATH=C:\OS2\SYSTEM
10240 32000

Note that in addition to changing the size specification, you might also want to designate a different drive and directory. IBM says that the swappath drive should be in the root directory on the most frequently used partition on your least frequently used hard drive. Putting it there reduces the amount of time it takes for OS/2 to access the SWAPPER.DAT file. At the very least, all other things being equal, you should set SWAPPATH to the root directory on whatever drive it is placed. If you do change the location, don't forget to delete the old SWAPPER.DAT file once the new one is created.

Change status of WIN-OS/2 Fast Load.

This option is set using the WIN-OS/2 Setup object in the System Setup folder. Enabling this option can speed up the loading of the first Windows program you run. This option works by loading the core WIN-OS/2 program so that it's ready and waiting when you run a Windows program. However, if you run Windows programs infrequently, then exercising the Fast Load option costs you both in terms of initial bootup time as well as in general system performance.

Uninstall multimedia support.

If you don't actually use multimedia—sound and movies—then consider either not installing multimedia or

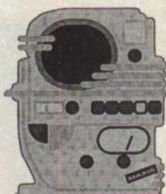
uninstalling it. Since OS/2 has to load the necessary drivers whether or not you use the feature, it increases bootup time. And its mere presence on your system—occupying 2 to 4 MB memory at all times—drags down performance. Even if you use just Windows multimedia applications under WIN-OS/2, then you should consider removing the OS/2 multimedia extensions. You do this by using the Selective Uninstall object in the System Setup folder. ♦

Herb Tyson is a computer industry analyst and consultant whose clients include IBM. He is the author of several books, including Your OS/2 Warp version 3 Consultant; 10 Minute Guide to OS/2; the Word for Windows 6 Super Book; and the forthcoming Navigating the Internet with OS/2 Warp. He can be reached on the Internet as tyson@cpcug.org.

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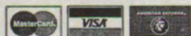
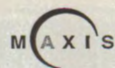
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REVIEWED BY ALAN JAY WEINER

Heart pounding, you choose door number two. Behind it waits a new car—or maybe not. Teasing, the host opens one of the other doors. No car! Do you want to stay with your first choice, or would you like to switch to the remaining door?

When Marilyn Vos Savant answered the door problem in her weekly *Parade Magazine* column, she caused a storm of protest. Many readers wrote challenging her assertion that by switching doors the game show contestant would increase the odds of winning. Rather than arguing, Merrill Callaway took a different tack—he wrote a REXX program to simulate the scenario.

REXX—as you probably know by now—is more than just the simple batch language provided by DOS (although IBM PC-DOS 7 supports REXX). A complete programming language, it is powerful, yet easy to learn and use. Callaway's simulation of the door problem demonstrates the ease with which REXX provides quick answers. More importantly (since few of us will be opening doors on game shows), he explains how the program works—explaining each statement's purpose and how they all fit together to solve the problem (along with a lesson in probability).

While many of the examples are useful on their own, the true value of *The REXX Cookbook* lies in the descriptions of each example's inner workings. Quite clearly, Callaway knows REXX. He literally dissects each program, providing extremely detailed explanations. It can be tedious to read, but it's a great way to gain understanding and very helpful when trying to use similar techniques. Programs are often built of pieces of other programs—take a few lines that work, modify them slightly and add some “stuff” around them.

As with much real-world software development, not everything works as planned. While developing the examples, some of them required work-arounds—for example, a file attribute set-

ting is different on OS/2 2.1 vs. 2.11, or a delay is needed to allow AmiPro to finish loading. Callaway clearly notes these tidbits.

While several of the examples are along the lines of the door problem—one-time quick-and-dirty answers—most of the programs will be useful on their own. After showing several REXX programs as editor macros and other programs to show the use of queues, he combines their capabilities, building a series of REXX programs to retrieve data from DB2/2 and pass it to AmiPro. These examples show real solutions to everyday problems.

Initially I found the book difficult to read. Bold face, uppercase and italics identify various terms. In fact, so much text is emphasized that at first I found it quite distracting. After a while, however, it became more useful.

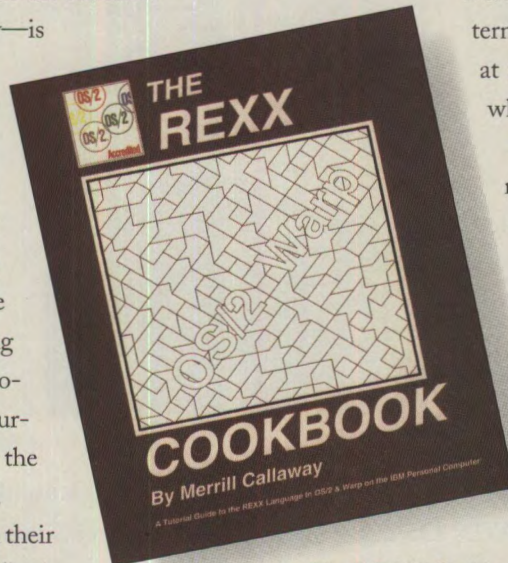
With its detailed explanations of so many complex topics and problem-avoiding tips, *The REXX Cookbook* contains plenty of useful information. Finding the information is more difficult than it should be—entries in the index are frequently just long lists of page numbers, forcing a lot of jumping around to find a particular reference. Subtopics would be helpful.

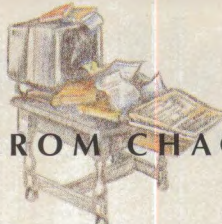
While it may not help you in the kitchen,

The REXX Cookbook could help you cook up some powerful scripts. To save yourself some typing, be sure to get the package that includes the companion diskette. The disk contains complete sources of all the example programs as well as executables for the VX-REXX examples.

And if you're ever on that game show, the odds are one in three if you don't switch, two in three if you do. If you don't believe me, read Chapter Four. ♦

Alan Jay Weiner develops systems software in Needham, Massachusetts. He can be reached on Bix as *aweiner* or on the Internet as *aweiner@bix.com*.





Reaping the Rewards of Competition

BY JERRY POURNELLE

In September the battle starts in earnest: Microsoft will bring out Windows 95 in late August, and they'll launch it with a bang. Microsoft is good at that. It will also be one of the most thoroughly tested products ever. I am currently on Build 490 of the beta test series, and today I spent an hour on the phone with the Microsoft product manager discussing problems I was having with programs I wrote in Structured Systems Group Commercial (compiled) BASIC in 1978 and revised in 1982.

The programs ran just fine in all known forms of DOS and Windows until Windows 95; now there seems to be an interaction with the DPT SCSI controller driver and Windows 95. Microsoft has been gathering data on my problem and likely will fix it before the release date. The Microsoft troops may not eliminate all the installation and compatibility bugs before Windows 95 goes golden, but they're sure trying.

Meanwhile, the good news is we have Warp Connect at Chaos Manor—several copies, in fact. The bad news is that it took three hours on the phone with IBM gurus to get it installed on Valiant, a Value Point Pentium. There's a story with that.

We had *Red Label* Warp on Valiant. Red Label doesn't have Windows; you furnish your own DOS and Windows.

There will be Red Label versions of Warp Connect, but for now there's only *Blue Label*, which contains WIN-OS/2, the IBM emulation of Windows under OS/2. Blue Label Warp doesn't want to install over Red Label. The remedy is to erase or rename the file SYSLEVEL.OS2 which resides in the OS2/INSTALL directory. That done, the installation ought to be easy. Mine wasn't. The reason is instructive.

When DOS looks for a file, including a library file, it first looks in the current logged in directory. OS/2 doesn't. Instead there's a library path in CONFIG.SYS. The first statement in that path ought to be “.” (dot, semicolon). That translates to “try the current directory first.” Alas, a lot of different programs mess around with OS2's CONFIG.SYS and apparently one of them removed that

dot, semicolon so that Warp Connect Install couldn't find a DLL.

When that was fixed, Install hung up again: you can't install Warp Connect on a system that's running IBM OS/2 LAN Server 4.0. Fortunately LAN Server knows how to uninstall itself, which it did quite easily (the uninstall comes with a “suicide” button).

Unfortunately, once we did that, the machine couldn't find the CD-ROM drive. That drive runs off a Creative Labs Sound Blaster Pro card and has never given me any trouble, but it had vanished. The remedy was to turn the machine off, not just do a soft reboot.

The best news is that after all that, it works. Moreover, the new

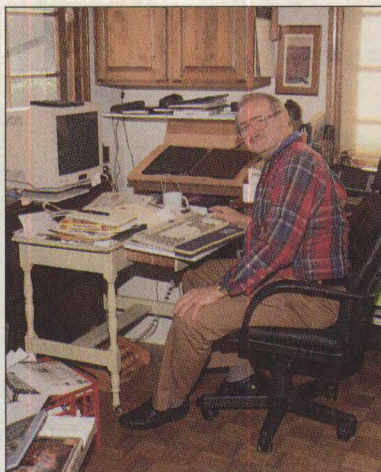
and streamlined Install program has been rewritten to take into account a number of complaints, including several of mine. It goes smoothly and when it's finished, not only can Warp Connect find all the machines out on my net, but the Value Point machine is easily seen from Windows NT, Windows for WorkGroups and Windows 95—as well as another OS/2 machine running Warp Connect.

One final point. We've been doing a lot of Internet surfing lately, and of the Internet Navigation tools we've tried, the ones supplied in the BonusPak that comes with Warp Connect are up there with the best.

The IBM Advantis network is a reliable way to get Internet access, but it's quite expensive. Fortunately the Warp Connect net tools work with other net access providers.

If IBM had delivered Warp Connect a year ago, Microsoft might have had to give up Windows 95; Warp Connect is that good. As it is, IBM and Microsoft will be head to head about the time you read this. IBM certainly has a competitive product—Warp Connect is smooth, and some of its capabilities are awesome.

Capitalism worked this time: both Warp Connect and Windows 95 are nifty improvements over previous operating systems. If you're looking to upgrade—and you should—now's the time. ♦



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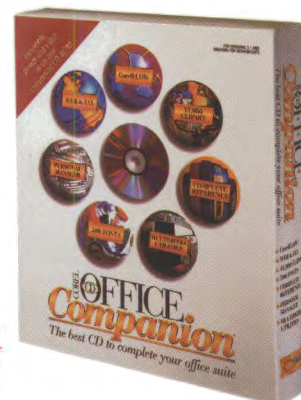


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